THE SOUL OF THE EAST

BY MARCUS EHRENPREIS

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THE SOUL OF THE EAST

Experiences and Reflections

Marcus Ehrenpreis

THE SOUL OF THE EAST

EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS

Translated from the Swedish by

ALFHILD HUEBSCH

VIGNETTES BY GUNNAR LINDVALL

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I

Across the New Balkans

The Orient is already in evidence at the Masaryk railway station in Prague. Not the real Orient of the Azhar at Cairo or the one of Haifa's street cafés, but that variant of the East known as Levantinism; a something, elusive of definition—the body of the East but without its spirit. It is a crumbling Orient, a traitorous deserter from itself, without fez, without veil, without Koran; it is an artificial, trumpery New Orient which has deliberately broken with its past and renounced its ancient heritage. As the Ber-

lin express draws into the Masaryk station at evening all of one's senses at once discern the Levant. The confused din, clumsy perspiring figures, false front of civilization which stops at the shirt-collar, odour of cheap cosmetics, yellow-backed, pinchbeck French literature—all this is the Levant. One is suddenly sucked into a whirlpool of strange, shouting, gesticulating, haggling, bustling people. There is something eccentric in their conduct, they are overloud, too sudden, too eager. Every word is charged with passion as if their lives were involved. Yet withal, there is something counterfeit and theatrical about them; almost, one would say, there is grease-paint on their souls. Oddish, incredible individuals appear on all sides—low foreheads, sodden eyes, protruding ears, thick underlips. Faded memories waken to life: was it not yesterday that I lived amongst these people and breathed their air? The Levantine type in the areas between the Balkans and the Mediterranean is, psychologically and socially, truly a "wavering form," a composite of Easterner and Westerner, multilingual, cunning, superficial, unreliable, materialistic and, above all, without tradition. This absence of tradition seems to account for the low intellectual and, to a certain

extent moral, quality of the Levantines; it is as if they were parentless, thrown entirely upon their own experience and abandoned to their proper poverty or the crumbs from strangers' tables. In this atmosphere more than anywhere else, I am aware, contradictorily enough, of the character-moulding and cultural power of tradition. In a spiritual sense these creatures are homeless; they are no longer Orientals nor yet Europeans. They have not freed themselves from the vices of the East nor acquired any of the virtues of the West. The mixed-breed Levantine lacks patriotism in our interpretation just as he lacks a language that is his alone. Similarly, he is unrelated to religion. The substantial Levantine merchant spends part of his life on the comfortable Simplon-Orient express between the Balkans and Paris, untroubled by ideas, emotions or culture. He gets his mental sustenance from the boulevards of the capitals; his moral models are the Western hedonists and mammon worshippers; the church he cedes in its entirety to the earthbound peasant. The Levantine proletarian of the soil is abused and gone to seed, poor and brutal, more animal than man. Thus the first impression upon the re-encounter is sharply unpleasant. It is not unlike a moral sea-

sickness, for all is wavering in this enlarged Balkan world, both men and conditions.

2

The dull run from Budapest to Belgrade, through wholly uninteresting country, gives rise to melancholy thoughts. A new and much enlarged Balkans has been created that stretches right to the heart of Central Europe. Even aside from political considerations, it is impossible to escape the depressing thought that these countries—both old and new Balkan states—have been afflicted not only by a terrible war but by a terrible peace as well. That which was established at the conference tables in Versailles, Trianon and elsewhere must be regarded as a tragic error. On this shaky ground nothing is more shaky than the newly laid down ethnical and territorial border lines. It is as if unrealistic amateurs had constructed these new Balkans, and what they have achieved seems more like diplomatic metaphysics than tenable realities. This world of theirs is an apparently arbitrary creation, cut out with diplomatic scissors and made fast with diplomatic paste. What was once organically coherent has been rent

apart, natural and economic unities have been broken, religious and lingual ties have been sundered. The impression produced is one of bewildering chaos in which languages, religions and tribes mingle without purpose and without hope. It is an unpeaceful Balkans that one traverses, less peaceful than ever before, created of arrogance and dilettantism. The historical sense rebels against this schematic interference in the living genius of the nations. The sense of justice cannot accept such a meaningless abuse of a casual political conjuncture.

A leaden dejection seems to have settled heavily upon the Balkan states. The war made everybody unhappy and the peace has made nobody happy. The victors would appear to merit our compassion no less than the defeated. Happiness seems absent from these regions and all things appear equally neglected and impoverished: the large cities with their dilapidated buildings in the prominent places, their lack of order and cleanliness, their destitute population and wilted youth; the countryside more slovenly and more devastated than ever, with its half-clad inhabitants dragging themselves along in gloom and serfdom. Filled with distress, one faces a violated humanity to whom victory and defeat have meant

nothing. Certain it is that defeat has come to human happiness, joy of life, morality and culture.

During my journey across Balkanized Hungary I could not free myself from these melancholy reflections. Hungary was harsh with its minorities, but which majority cares to cast the first stone? Now the tables are turned and Hungary feels the strangle-hold like the others. Could this have been the intention of the war? Will there be more justice and more happiness on earth if the oppressed of yesterday become the oppressors of today? The oppression remains anyhow, the parties have but exchanged rôles. Hungary seems to be merely a shadow of itself. It is vain to search for remains of its pre-war characteristic overflowing health, vitality and luxuriance. The traveller passes through sleepy railway stations, lonely villages and silent towns. The central station of Budapest, once boiling with life as a beehive, presents itself sluggish, gloomy and almost provincial. A cursory survey of Budapest's formerly impressive principal streets is constricting in its evidences of material as well as moral poverty. The streets no longer bear witness to the old good taste; a something that is brutal and vulgar obtrudes itself. This holds true not

only of Budapest. Vienna alone retains some of its glamour and refinement. Almost everywhere else one discovers that visits to large cities no longer tend to edify; elevation of the spirit is to be found only in sublime natural scenery and in regions of classical culture. Hungary is one of the lands made ill by the war and not cured by the peace. The sensational counterfeiting scandal in which prominent aristocrats and officials were implicated (in 1926) was one of the symptoms of its feverish state. The event implied, in any case, that what Hungary needs is unity, not dispersal; its sickness will not yield to religious persecutions; the so-called "protectors of the race" and "awakening" Hungarians proved not to be the saviours of the realm. The recovery of the nations must begin with the individual. No reversal leads upward as long as the individual remains in his abasement. The revolution must begin in our hearts. We must renew ourselves before renewing states and societies. We must learn to conserve the inner peace before seeking an external peace. It is man that must improve.

3

Jugoslavia, the newly created Serbo-Croatian

power begins at Subotica, once Hungarian, and extends southward to Gevgeli at the border of the new Greece. One traverses in twenty-four hours this new political entity which is not particularly hope-inspiring. The antithetic nature of politics and culture is here more than ever apparent. This country is brimful of politics but the level of its culture does not seem to be notably high. The journey leads through neglected and almost deserted regions with such constant evidence of disorder and lack of social development as to be repellent. This over-politicized country where partisanship and politics consume every energy is symbolized by the central railway station of Belgrade where the train halts for a few hours. The entrance to the capital of a land of twelve millions might well be that of a village. The streets about the station are dark, unpaved, and almost impassable. There are no police to whom the inquiring traveller can turn. Drivers and porters seem to be absolutely sovereign and they make full use of their unchecked power. The people, on the whole, seem to be destitute and uncared for. In a word, a forbidding picture of political overfeeding, social mismanagement and ill-applied democracy. This disagreeable moment at the Belgrade station causes my

aversion to politics to expand into the ardent wish that the sorely tried Balkan states may depoliticize themselves at the earliest possible time. These nations need, primarily, sewerage systems in cities, sanitary dwellings, potable water, more comfortable transport facilities and—above all else—stability and order. Instead, they are fed, from dawn to eve, on grandiose political schemes and never-ending, impassioned debates. The wisest Balkan statesman would be he who diverted the activity of the people away from party organizations into the channels of constructive work; who raised the standard of living and enhanced the amenities in these neglected lands.

My first discomfort over, my memories and impressions of former visits asserted themselves and enabled me to attempt a more just estimate of the mind of the new Serbia. It is known that the Serbs' own opinion of their country and their place is quite different from that of spoiled Western tourists who evaluate cities according to the order that prevails and people by their clothes. Far from harbouring any sense of inferiority they cultivate, in their literature and in their lives, a notion that they are the elect, and thus exclude all self-criticism. The ex-

tent to which national self-consciousness can thrive even in badly lighted and quite impassable streets may seem astonishing. Evidently an exaggerated opinion of one's own importance can compensate for the lack of order and prosperity. One thing is certain: there is an opiate-like national pathos in high and low that reduces susceptibility to the shortcomings of their personal and public life. This pathos—a strange blend of Slavic lyricism and Oriental fatalism—was founded on reality before the World War. The problem then was to liberate eleven millions of their race from the Habsburg rule and to unite them with the mother country. The Serajevo murder, the World War and the Versailles treaty have converted this sweet dream into (evidently less sweet) reality. But the national pathos persists unremittingly in the hearts of the Serbs. In the midst of the harshest reality, beset by enemies, declared and covert, this people still lives its enviable dream-life and its political conceptions are shot through with lyric strands. What is the problem now?

At last I find refuge in the large restaurant of the *Petrograd,* the hotel at the central station, at whose crowded tables there is plain evidence of

highly-charged air. This is no place to relax strained nerves; the band plays patriotic airs, the highly aromatic national dishes are served by unnecessarily noisy waiters, and all about is swirling animation. Whilst eating and drinking the guests conduct loud discussions across the tables, and the dining-room seems like an excited patriotic club. Distinctly and with increasing frequency my ear catches a name which is evidently in everybody's mind at this moment: *Njegos.*

I turn to my neighbour at the table, an elderly Serbian officer. "What's all this about Njegos?" "Njegos," he replies readily and in Serbian elocution, "Njegos, the prince-bishop of Montenegro, is regarded as the prophet of the whole Serbian nation. This year the King and the people joined in celebrating his memory, and his prophecies are now common talk. It was he who foretold the united Greater Serbia. Also he predicted a sort of United States of Southern Europe under the hegemony of Serbia. To us," my informant concluded, "Njegos is the incarnation of our national idea, the idea of the historic mission of the Serbian people."

The atmosphere has become insufferably oppressive and, somewhat confused, I take leave of that

strange Hotel Petrograd with its patriotic music, its eloquent officer, Njegos and the world mission of Serbia.

4

That which excites the greatest interest on this long journey from West to East is Macedonia. Like an iron ring the mighty snow-covered mountain ranges of the Balkans encircle this gloomily beautiful, afflicted country. A tragic bit of earth, difficult of access, stretches grandly between the Struma and the Vardar, which for decades has kept a continent in turmoil. What is there that glows incessantly under its snowy peaks that makes this land into an ever-bleeding battlefield?

As the great Macedonian landscape unrolls I cannot free myself of the impression of being in the midst of the sanguinary European puzzle which, to this day, neither diplomacy nor war has solved satisfactorily. It seems absurd to think that, for decades, those distant ranges have been the scene of fighting about the destinies of Europe and that the bloody rebellions plotted in their dark fastnesses indirectly concern us all. *Nostra res agitur.* Memories and

figures of past years recur to me. My thoughts revert to the desperate struggle for freedom that Bulgaria and the other Balkan nations waged for a generation. Turkey was then the common enemy, the liberation of Macedonia the supreme goal. Their strength grew invisibly, the Balkan alliance matured under cover until the first Balkan War burst (1912) and the day of freedom arrived. Macedonia got her liberty, but not peace. Year after year the Balkan people wrestled with this tragic vital problem. Bulgaria's severely tested statesmen were, without exception, obliged to comply with the categorical imperative of the Macedonian revolution. Under compulsion of potent terroristic opinion, even the soberest of them had to swallow the political dogma denominated San Stefanian Bulgaria (i. e. Greater Bulgaria, extending from the Black Sea to Albania and from the Danube to the Ægean Sea, as created by the treaty of San Stefano in 1878). Behind, or rather ahead of them, were the irresponsible and half-concealed leaders of the Macedonian revolution, intrepid almost to madness, worked up to a frenzy which belittled death; some of whom were dubious personalities, adventurers and terrorists. This "Macedonism," in sublimation a mystical

national consciousness, held as fervently as a religious belief, also found expression as the fundamental note in the neo-Bulgarian literature, from Ivan Vazoff, a nationalistic poet, to the latest modernists. In these dismal mountain gorges, hunted for his life, Peju Javoroff, Bulgaria's greatest lyricist, edited his hectographed revolutionary sheet, *Svoboda ili smrt* (Liberty or Death). Petko Slaveïkoff, the poet-leader and greatest intellect of new Bulgaria, immortalized this Balkan landscape with all its tragedy in a national epic on a universal scale, *The Bloody Song*. The centre of the poem is Balkan, a witness for centuries of the Orient's changing destinies:

Of grave and noble mien, cloaked in a misty haze,
The Balkans in the distance look out with threatening gaze;
They dream in deep absorption of bygone derring-do;
They stand like men of battle prepared to guard those who
Have pitched their camp—a younger race of fighting men—
On hillocks round about.

Now the countenance of the Balkans is again threatening and ominous. The common enemy is de-

feated, but the mutual hostility and the intolerance remain. At this hour Macedonia seems like a symbol of the intolerance of all peoples. Is not the whole of present-day Europe a great Macedonia, where all fight against all, where the strong oppress the weak, where majorities in power force their religions and languages upon the minorities? The problem of the religious and cultural rights of minorities is no longer a merely Macedonian but a European affair. The new Europe created in Versailles has become a peaceless continent. Everywhere religious and national minorities are battling for their right to practise their inherited faith and to speak the language of their forefathers without hindrance. But here in Macedonia such disputes are not generally determined by parliamentary means, and the Balkans wear a grave and menacing aspect.

No less dismal than the landscape is one's mood during the tedious journey through this unhappy country. The road is bordered by mighty clefts and rushing brooks. One travels through solemn ranges, stern as the events they have witnessed, heroic and silent as the people whose fire and sword have made the land into a perpetual hearth of revolution. Familiar place-names appear: Koprülü, Veles, Prilep,

Skopie, Monastir and Shtip. Here glowed the unquenchable fire of Macedonian revolution; generations—led by heroes or charlatans—fought and fell here. Now these primitive towns and villages lie gloomy and apparently peaceful, lulled to rest in the sublimity of their setting and shrouded in fateful silence.

II

The Luminous City

Athens is the city of light. The Northerner who journeys a hundred hours to set foot on this old-new soil for the first time is startled to find himself enfolded in the concentration of light that streams towards him from all directions. The transparent blue of the sky—this Attic blue of Homer: "Joyous azure drenched in light"—passes into the silvery-white vibrations of the air; the Pentelic marble of the palaces—"not stone but flesh"—glows yellow-white, and in the distance the Ægean Sea glitters in

every rainbow hue. Light so lavish as to be unique even in the sunny East pours out over this plot of earth. It is perhaps more vivid than that which surrounds the ancient Egyptian royal tombs or that of the glowing yellow sand at the Bay of Acre. Pausanias says of Lycosura, the Arcadian city, that it was the first of all the cities on earth to see the sun. Of Athens it might be said that it, of all cities, sees the sun for the longest period.

The centre of this luminous prospect is the Athenian himself—an organic part of it—joyous with life, smiling, carefree, content and lightfooted. Seemingly less burdened by their own weight than other people, there is something sinuous and gliding in the Greeks' carriage. This persistent sunshine is a foe to melancholy; the Athenian, steeped in light and warmth, is a stranger to ennui, he appears to be on good terms with himself and the world. In the early morning the dewy streets are crowded with workers as gay as if on their way to a dance. A few hours later the park at the royal castle is filled with gossiping crowds that make merry over their tobacco and beer. It is the end of December and the thermometer registers 84° F.; the luxuriant verdure is refreshing to the eye and the midday sun burns as it

does in the middle of summer in cooler zones. But the Athenian summer, on the other hand, is insufferable; the temperature sometimes rises to 104°. People dedicate the hottest hours of the day to sleep and turn night into day. This torridity was even too much for Diogenes who sought coolness in airier Corinth (just now devastated by the earthquakes).

2

When Otto of the Wittelsbachs moved the capital from Nauplia to Athens in 1834 it was like a village destitute of all but its bounteous sun, its Acropolis and its proud name. Its citizens occupied small, mean dwellings in the vicinity of the Acropolis; business centred in a mediæval market, with little shops and open-air benches for cobblers, tailors and coppersmiths. As if in a walled court, the new Athens lies between the Acropolis and the steep height of Lycabettus—a modern metropolis with almost one million inhabitants, with grand, asphalted boulevards, well-tended parks and monumental buildings, enclosed by towering hills: the stretch of Parnassus, massive Hymettus, and Pentelicus; westward the portal gives towards the sea. The grandeur of the

landscape, the relics of Hellas, splendour in stone and architectural delights, unite to form a civic whole matchless in its kind. On the extreme spur of the heights of the Acropolis I find a place where I may inbibe the unforgettable sight in great draughts. The guide apprises me that it is a favourite spot for suicides and in the rapture of the moment I am unable to conceive of death deliberately chosen amidst this life-affirming beauty. Enthralled, my eyes shift from the picture to the frame and from the frame to the picture, and discover that they are indivisibly joined, that the city issues out of the landscape as does a tree from the earth. The panorama from the Acropolis is more overwhelming than the view from Monte Pincio; as a landscape it is as highly charged with beauty as the prospect from the citadel of Cairo; it is reminiscent of the magnificent panorama from Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. In the closely massed houses the eye discerns the classical buildings: the temples of Zeus and of Theseus; the stadium, re-erected on the site of the stadium of old, capable of holding more than 70,000 spectators. Unexpectedly one comes upon a complex of dark brown structures like barracks; it is the city of the refugees. Since the conclusion of peace they have been

coming from Asia Minor, Constantinople and the Balkans, descending on the country like an avalanche; in almost no time they have doubled and trebled the population of the cities. These refugees constitute the great social and economic problem of New Greece; one cannot but admire the skill with which this shifting of the population has thus far been effected. Crowds of refugees are to be seen everywhere, in the cities and on the country roads; thousands of them are engaged in public works, such as building roads and streets. These millions of homeless are temporarily sheltered in barracks and schools, in hospitals and prisons; some of them have even been housed in the apartments de luxe of the royal palace.

One day during Christmas week, while basking in the sun on the terrace of the Grande Bretagne Hotel, I watch the odd scene around the royal palace directly opposite. The people swarm like ants, each at work in his place at his given task, the whole thing guided by an invisible hand, evidently perfectly organized and disciplined. Young girls pass, bearing jugs on their shoulders, labourers are at work in the park. Crones with folded arms sit on the marble steps of the palace, their eyes seeming to seek the re-

mote Turkish village and the precious hut whence they were hurled to this royal abode by the storm of the World War. On every hand there is teeming life and motion; newspaper-venders call out the latest news, elegant automobiles shoot by, groups of gesticulating people fill the air with their din and, agile as squirrels, the *lustri,* little shoeblacks, dart about with their boxes. They take possession of your feet before you know where you are and, quick as lightning, your two shoes are being subjected to simultaneous treatment. These Athenian *lustri* fully equal their colleagues of Cairo in intrusiveness and dexterity.

3

A walk through the streets of Athens provides opportunity to cull some traits conspicuous in the new life of its people. The passionate interest in politics characteristic of the antique Hellene is present in the modern Greek. The daily papers are read in the streets and warmly discussed. In every open-air café there are spontaneous political disputations in which petty tradesmen scarcely able to run their little shops shout themselves hoarse over the best

form of government and the ideal social order. The eagerness for education is not less passionate. In the windows of modern book shops the newest literary products in various languages are displayed. Contemporary Greek novelists and poets, most of them influenced by the modernism of western Europe, have a large circle of readers. The youth of the land is intensely devoted to academic studies. Towards evening I enter the imposing marble palace of the national library and am surprised to find so many mental workers in the general reading room at this hour, but the amiable librarian has a greater surprise in store for me. He takes me to another reading room especially intended for students. It is a very large room and every place is occupied. Seated at long tables, hundreds of men but fewer women are absorbed in work. This manifestation of eagerness to learn in so pronouncedly commercial a people is impressive. The librarian mentions that 15,000 students are enrolled at the University of Athens. Some may think this an excessive number, but in the Balkans an intellectual proletariat is an unavoidable reaction against illiteracy.

Particularly impressive is a rare civic spirit observable in this folk, that too being a heritage from

ancient Hellas. It is not uncommon for Greek business men to give fortunes running into the millions for purposes of national culture, accumulations that represent lifetimes of hard work. Modern Athens' monumental buildings devoted to national culture, to art and social welfare, are, with few exceptions, the result of private gifts. Even the magnificent automobile road direct to the sea, that connects Athens with Phaleron, a modern bathing resort, is the donation of a private citizen.

The resplendent palaces of culture in Athens serve also to disclose an unparalleled civic spirit. At the entrance to most of the large edifices—the new museum, the university, the national library, the Zappeion—the portrait busts of their donors are displayed, eloquent testimonials to a patriotic self-sacrifice of unexampled magnitude.

4

During my short sojourn in Athens I make a daily pilgrimage to the Acropolis. It is still the soul of the city and the link that joins New Greece to Hellas. This consecrated height exists not as an archæological remain like the Roman Forum; it is,

rather, a living token of the former glamour of Hellas, an exhortation and a guide to new generations. Modern Athens is growing in the shadow of the Acropolis and trying to rise to its altitude. Fundamentally considered, the vital problem of present-day Greece is perhaps this: how can ancient Hellas be quickened to new life by the Greeks of our time. The political issues between republicans and monarchists and the skirmishes about the central personality of the exiled Venizelos have no more than a surface significance; the revolution-making generals do not at all represent the inner life of New Greece. Deep down the longing for a reunion with Hellas of old persists; there persists, too, the sense of historic responsibility with which the legatees of an ancient civilization are imbued. The controversy that is being waged over language in present-day Greece is a proof of this. There is the literary (or "pure") language—very reminiscent of the language of the Gospels—and a common speech (the "folk" language) whose use predominates. The latter is a mongrel tongue, largely a growth that spread out from Constantinople through the entire Byzantine realm. The contest for supremacy between these languages has invaded politics as well as literature, and the con-

troversy has even found expression in violent street brawls.

The stranger treads the sanctified site of the Acropolis with a feeling of profound emotion. He is shown the theatre of Dionysus, the Areopagus, the three steps from which Pericles and Demosthenes spoke to the Athenians. Our guide points out the place on the right of the road where legend—repudiated by science—has it that Socrates drank the hemlock and, far away, the scene of Plato's Academy, where his followers attended meals that were feasts of reason, immortalized in his Symposium. Transported, one faces the white-shimmering splendour of the columns of the Propylæum, the Parthenon, the Erechtheum and the Temple of Nike. There is a glamour of eternity about this corner of the earth whose power none can elude. One feels that the human soul at its uttermost possibilities has here blended with light, air and landscape in an expression of beauty that not even the passing of thousands of years has dimmed.

My mind turns to another hill which it had been granted me to tread a few months before; my sacred temple mount in Jerusalem. Are these two eminences irreconcilable antipodes? Are Hellenism and Ju-

daism antagonistic forces? Deeply moved, I meditate in the shadow of the Parthenon. I think of Nietzsche's antithesis: Hellas (Rome) or Judæa; I recall the penitential mood of Tjernikowsky, the neo-Hebrew poet, in a moment of self-forgetful apostacy, confronting the statue of Apollo:

> I come to thee, thou know'st me not,
> the Jew, thy everlasting opposite.
> —Apollo, I come,
> come to thee, making obeisance
> before thy likeness, archetype of life.

The ruins of the antique world of Hellas evoke neither enmity nor penitence. Hellenism and Judaism represent different streams of life, and they need not therefore be antagonistic to each other. Are they not, perhaps, the two arms of humanity aspiring to eternity, stretched toward the height, each in its own direction?

III

Saloniki, Centre of the Sephardim

The name of Saloniki has always been surrounded by a poetic glamour. The venerable age of the Jewish community of Saloniki and its unique traditionalism invested it with a quality similar to that which Jerusalem held for the exile, and some of its glory persists even to our day. As long ago as the early apostles we learn of an organized and vigorous Jewish community in that city. Thus the Acts of the Apostles reads: "Now when they had passed through

Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures. . . ."

During the subsequent centuries the far-famed piety and hospitality of this people attracted an ever-increasing number of homeless refugees from the entire Jewish Diaspora. But not until the great influx of Sephardic Jews from the Iberian peninsula towards the end of the XV century did that community come into its dominating position. Here the best and the most influential of the Spanish immigrants gathered, learned rabbis, poets, large traders; here the earliest Hebrew printeries and libraries were founded; here the Hispano-Jewish culture found asylum. Since those days the Saloniki community has been regarded as the Sephardic centre, "a mother in Israel," as Samuel Usque, the XVI century Portuguese-Jewish poet denominated it in the proud scriptural term. Sultan Bayezid II, who hospitably opened the doors of Turkey to the Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal, said rightly, "Ferdinand the Catholic impoverished his country that mine might be enriched." In time Saloniki became a pros-

perous trade centre which served to stimulate the economic life of the whole Turkish empire. Simultaneously it grew to be the seat of a revived Jewish tradition which the Spanish and Portuguese Jews —the Sephardim—maintained faithfully and in purity. Thus arose a thing unique: a markedly Jewish city in the Diaspora, the Jews in a majority, with a genuine and uncorrupted legacy of the past. It was like a Jewish museum, endowed with life, nurtured by one generation after another. Here the Castilian theologians and the descendants of poets were untrammelled in the enjoyment and practice of one of the oldest religions of the world. Here generations thrived which represented, bodily and mentally, something of ancient and unspoiled Judaism. Thus it is that, within and without the faith, the name of Saloniki rings with its own particular note. After the second Balkan war a project was mooted to make the city an international asylum for Jews under the protection of the Powers.

Travellers have reported with admiration the remarkable and distinctive life of this community. A Norwegian writer, Alexander L. Kielland, was particularly impressed by the Saloniki Jews, and made these observations in the nineties: "To see

these descendants of the ancient Jews was to resolve the doubts with which I had read Josephus this winter. . . . In the Jews of Saloniki one recognizes the indomitable strength of which Josephus tells, a heroic people whose conquest was almost the most difficult in which the Romans engaged. . . . As I watched these men walking the streets or before the city wall on a Sabbath morning it seemed to me that I had never seen handsomer faces or finer expressions. There was a forthright benevolence and a dignity. . . . Were I a Jew and living in northern Europe I would pilgrimage to Saloniki annually, as one goes to a resort. I would visit my kinsmen, dressed up in the sable-trimmed caftan and light-coloured fine smock, and, joyous in the beauty of the chosen people—as it has been permitted to maintain itself and develop—I would breathe deeply and throw my head back. . . ."

2

During the few days I spent in Saloniki towards the end of December, 1925, my sensations were not unlike those which Kielland describes. The city itself is not a very edifying sight at present. One

had better stay without its walls to enjoy it; from aboard a vessel out in the gulf a comprehensive view of the picturesque, terraced panorama of Saloniki, snow-covered Olympus in the background, may be had. But once inside the walls the eye meets the old city as known to Abdul Hamid: narrow, crooked streets, tumble-down houses, little Turkish cafés side by side with modern department stores, the usual Oriental din and confusion. This heap of ruins, half dilapidated and half burned down, is giving way to a rapidly growing new city with magnificent wide boulevards, electric lights and drainage, whose population has almost quadrupled in the last few years because of the late shifting of nationals. This incongruous mixture of old and new is disturbing and tiring. Wandering through the many areas where building is in progress the impression received is one of feverish activity, particularly conspicuous in this Oriental milieu. But to search the picture of the town's life for a trace of comfort, ripe culture, or feeling for art is a vain thing. An oppressive and dusty atmosphere pervades this hustling and growing place; far and wide no verdure, no tree, nothing to rest the weary eye. However, the nearby gulf,

smiling and glittering, with the refractory Vardar in distant, shimmering silhouette, tends to refresh excited senses. Not far from these crowded ways lies a solitary villa near the sea, surrounded by a great park, where Abdul Hamid, the dethroned Sultan, spent the closing years of his life. Allatini, one of his Jewish subjects, placed it at his disposal, a quiet refuge well adapted to meditation on the transitoriness of worldly power. This melancholy retreat of the last Turkish absolute ruler is now the noisy gathering place of carefree Greek officers. The effect of the town as a whole is confusing; at the moment it is in the throes of birth, it is a jumble of decline and regeneration. Not a place where one would like to live!

Since 1925 the work of construction in the city has progressed on a large scale, and Saloniki, during my sojourn there looking like an enormous scaffolding, has now become a really modern metropolis. The city has got its new character from the hundreds of thousands of refugees who since the conclusion of the peace have settled down there. Under such abnormal conditions it was easier to regulate the streets than the life of the people. The public

life in this city, where antagonistic political and social powers are at grips, still seems to be shivering from fever.

3

Jewish Saloniki offers moments edifying and impressive. Some of its old glamour, too, has departed. Yet, despite the impairment of its vital nerve by repeated wars and destructive fires, it still persists, powerful and full of vigour, worthy of the great past on which it looks back. Little is known of its fortunes during the first thousand years of our era. In 1170 Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveller, found 500 Jewish inhabitants in Saloniki occupied in various crafts under their own manager who, however, was in the government pay. In the XIII and XIV centuries refugees in substantial numbers from Germany, France and Italy gathered about the nucleus and established separate synagogues, naming them after the respective localities of their origin. In the middle of the XV century the Jews were accorded rights equal to those of the rest of the non-Moslem population, and their chief rabbi was placed on a parity with the head of the Greek

Church. The XVI and XVII centuries were the golden age of Jewish Saloniki. Thousands of Maranos—Jews from Portugal and Spain who adopted Christianity as an expedient—took refuge in free Saloniki where, like Uriel Acosta in Amsterdam, they were reunited with their old faith. Such brought with them culture and wealth, and their presence gave impulse to new intellectual activity. Rabbinical scholarship flourished in the celebrated academies of Saloniki; duly vested rabbis preserved order and administered the law. Towards the end of the XVII century Sabbatai Zevi, a self-proclaimed Messiah, attracted enthusiastic adherents in large numbers in Saloniki's cabbalistic circles, and their descendants, constituting an order of crypto-Jews, still live in Saloniki where they are known as *Dönmeh* (apostates). Some of the leaders of the Young Turk movement, among them Taalat Pasha, Grand Vizier, later assassinated, and Djavid Bey, Minister of Finance, who was later executed, belonged to the sect.

Due to the Jews' numerical strength—there were about 85,000 out of a population of 135,000—Jewish Saloniki was able to preserve its unique position until the World War. Set amidst the Turkish

imperium the Jews were able to create an atmosphere that gave the whole town an almost biblical character. On the Sabbath and Jewish holy days all labour ceased, every wheel stood still. In the harbour, too, Sabbath stillness reigned, the 400 Jewish dockers being on promenade in their long, fur-edged caftans. Much of this biblical flavour still prevails even though conditions have changed. The influx of refugees during the post-war years has increased the city's population to a half million, and at the present time it is but fifteen per cent Jewish. The ceremonialism of old has, nevertheless, remained unchanged. A Friday evening in Saloniki is a singular and memorable event. In holiday attire, crowds flow through all the streets, towards the synagogues. Thousands of Sabbath candles flicker from open windows and porches. A delicious peace suffuses the Jewish quarters. Ringing song is heard from the illuminated houses, and ancient Hebrew hymns float solemnly in the air. The people tried by daily cares lift up their hearts to God, the air vibrates in the rhythm of eternity. It is a moment of rapture.

All that I saw of Jewish Saloniki bore witness to a vitality that had survived the disturbed condi-

tions unshaken. There were orphan asylums, canteens for poor schoolchildren, hospitals, all on a high level of order, cleanliness and discipline. There were public schools, some conducted in the Hebrew language, that, with respect to pedagogy and buildings, need fear no comparison. There were new quarters for the poor with proper, well planned and incredibly cheap flats, erected by the Jewish community after the fire of 1917, which seemed to me models of rational and well bestowed social help. But it is the Sephardic problem, as focused here, which, above all, gives Jewish Saloniki a more general interest. This is perhaps the last place in the world where the Sephardim, this Judaic group of multiform interest, can hope to survive in their pristine purity.

4

The Saloniki of today provides a trustworthy picture of the peculiar characteristics native to the Sephardim, or Spaniols, their persons and physiognomy, their language, customs and manners. When Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella signed the decree expelling the Jews, in March, 1492 ("We

recommend that all Jews be expelled from the Kingdoms and that they may never be allowed to return") they committed an act fatal both to Spain and to the Jews, tantamount to violent destruction of the flourishing culture personified principally by Gabirol, Moses and Abraham Ibn-Ezra, Jehuda Halevi and Maimonides. Straightway at least 300,000 people (according to other sources the number exceeded half a million) set out in search of new homes, taking with them nothing but their torah and stones from the tombs of their ancestors. Small groups settled in Holland and Italy (some emigrating later to England) and adapted themselves readily to their new hosts with respect to language and habits of life. Far more settled in the northern states of Africa, but the largest number established themselves in Turkey. There they have lived their own peculiar life ever since, a life at once old-Jewish and old-Spanish. Speaking ethnologically, they represent the higher and purer Sephardic type. It is known that Rembrandt displayed a special interest in this Sephardic element and even went to live in the Amsterdam ghetto in order to become more closely acquainted with it. To this day the Sephardic cast of features retains its

singularity, and Rembrandtesque figures[1] are still to be encountered in the Jewish quarter of Saloniki. Indeed, this observation has already been made by Karl Vogt, a Swiss scientist, who thus describes the Sephardim: "In the Orient and the countries round the Mediterranean we come upon this Semitic tribe with long black hair and beard, large almond-shaped black eyes, oblong faces wearing a melancholy expression; exactly the type one meets in Rembrandt's portraits." There is a suggestion of the noble and dignified in their bearing, something of the old Spanish *grandezza* coupled with historical self-consciousness. Their strength lies not in creating new values but in preserving the accepted ones. Their genius is evidently a kind of active conservatism; they are the surviving bearers of an ancient, partly vanished civilization.

In such capacity they have also preserved much of the Hispanic culture of another day. The Sephardim speak a language—Ladino—that consists of old Spanish, or rather Castilian, mixed with elements from the Hebrew, Turkish or Slavic. Characteristically enough, they themselves denominate it *Giudesmo* (Jewish), just as the eastern Jews

[1] His *Bearer,* for instance.

whose colloquial speech is based on Middle High German call theirs *Yiddish*. Ladino is spoken commonly and is used in the schools, at public worship and business life; it is written in special Jewish characters, possesses a literature and is the medium for a widely circulated press, there being a dozen Spaniol newspapers of which five are daily published in Saloniki alone. This tender attachment to the language of their fathers' land testifies to the intellectual and political adaptability that marks the Jewish mind. With the language they have preserved much of the old Spanish treasury of culture: wonderful Castilian proverbs (assembled by Chayim Bedyarano, Chief Rabbi of Turkey, by commission of the Spanish Academy of Science); old romances and folk-songs originally brought together in the famous Romancero collection (1600), love songs and nursery rhymes. Some of this is enchantingly naïve, some instinct with profound experience and knowledge of life. Many of the songs saved by the Sephardim in the Orient have been forgotten in Spain, the one here quoted being among them. It is in Castilian but was set down in Rustchuk, a Bulgarian city on the Danube. It belongs to a children's game,

the players standing in single file, with closed eyes, singing:

Venid, venid Cavallero,
assuvid al trionastero,
escuje cuala quereis
a la bella non mi tomeis.

When the Spanish Academy, a few decades ago, prepared a complete collection of old Spanish romances, it sent Manríquez De Lara, well-known composer and writer, actually a general, to the Sephardim of the Orient—whose forbears had been banished from Spain—to obtain the romances they had safeguarded. The irony of history!

5

When the Spanish Academy, a few decades ago, ances of Jewish culture, are now scattered over the Balkan states, the territory that once was Turkey, northern Africa, Palestine and South America. They number one and one-half millions. Angelo Pulido, a Spanish senator who, for decades, has led the movement to restore the Sephardic Jews to Spain, esti-

mates their strength at two millions. (See his *Le Peuple Judéo-Espagnol, Première Base Mondiale de l'Espagne,* Paris, 1923.) Much that is beautiful and likeable resides in this age-old branch of Israel as, indeed, it does in everything that is at once pure-bred and unique. Just now the Sephardim, in common with the whole Orient, are going through a profound spiritual and social crisis. Contact with Western civilization has produced ferment in the entire Eastern world. Parallel with the self-assertion of the peoples of Asia is the irresistible attraction which the advancing European-American civilization holds for many of them. The wakening East strives to attain the technical and scientific culture of the West at the very moment that the West itself is dominated by the mood of collapse. There is something tragic in the thought that this process of Europeanization may also sweep away the Sephardic culture which, by all signs, is still pulsing with life.

IV

On the Way to Egypt

Travelling from Munich to Trieste is like traversing a torn map. In a twelve-hours' journey four states are passed through and about six passport and customs inspections are suffered. The superb East Bavarian Alps are skirted near Reichenhall and Berchtesgaden. There is a happy re-encounter with Salzburg, ever beautiful, where both landscape and people exhale the ancient Austrian *Gemütlichkeit*. But shortly thereupon the scene will change to some godforsaken Jugoslavian village huddled about a

station, where you feel far from a civilization in common with ours. Even the dining-car, the only symbol of civilization, which is generally attached to trains, has to be forgone on this political zigzag line. Under most dubious circumstances one has to be content to appease one's hunger with equally dubious goat-cheese, bread of venerable age and tea of a Serbian blend. Before long comes Italian territory and a sense of liberation; *"Die Erde hat mich wieder."* Soon the Adriatic is disclosed afar and we are in Mussolini's New Italy, in proud Trieste.

We are welcomed by a raging wind and the dark night is filled with its long-drawn and ominous howling. An introduction to Trieste produces the illusion of being in a house with all doors wide open and the windows broken. One feels wholly unprotected and helplessly at the mercy of the elements. But the morning and a refreshing walk along the Molo in brilliant sunshine reveal the smiling, withal imposing countenance of this beautiful city. The walk leads from the railway station through broad and stately boulevards, along the monumental quay with the Gulf of Trieste on the left and picturesque Schlossberg straight ahead, and into the midst of the southern volatility that gives such gay and lively

character to the Italian cities. The streets are filled with smiling and voluble people, well fed and seemingly carefree. Busy black-shawled women, evidently of the middle class, hatless, gather at the big market-hall on the Molo.

Mussolini's Italy impresses itself sharply during the rapid journey from city to city, on the way to the Orient and returning from there. Threading the lively streets of Trieste I ponder on the change this country has undergone since my last visit, immediately after the Balkan War. Then the black and yellow flag waved over the shores of the Adriatic, and Trieste was the focus of an anti-Austrian irredentism whipped up to the uttermost, which shook the old Habsburg empire to its foundations. Anæmic and impoverished, Italy waned under the unnatural alliance with Austria. Gabriele d'Annunzio was gaining his first laurels as a liberator of the people with his ecstatic hymns to *"mare nostrum"*; in Rome war was preached openly by a group of deputies headed by Salvatore Barzilai, the temperamental lawyer who, later as minister, was charged with "administering" the "unredeemed provinces." In September, 1913, Marchese di San Giuliano, the sagacious Foreign Minister, said to me, "We have

to be allied to Austria in order not to fight her." Now Italy is a country that has recuperated and is developing progressively. The unredeemed provinces are united with the mother country, and the people, too (as is confirmed in widely different quarters) feel themselves delivered from faint-heartedness and self-surrender. Mussolini, *il Duce,* has undeniably restored to thirty-eight millions of Italians their belief in themselves. With him firmness and conscious destiny entered the public life of the nation. He also gave a touch of the ancient Roman dreams of greatness to the spirit of the people. I am unable to discern any original, positive thought in Fascism. It was born of a negative thought: parliamentarism—in Italy as elsewhere—has proved itself unable to direct the fortunes of the people, and so the yearning arose for the strong man, a sort of political messianism. The only positive thing in Fascism, visible to all, is the Cæsarian personality of Mussolini. Fascism is Mussolini, his iron will and veritably demonic power over the masses. In Naples I saw tens of thousands of "black shirts" marching jubilantly through the traffic-free streets, callow youths who shouted at the top of their lungs, "Benito Mussolini! *Eia, eia, allala!*" It was not at all an edi-

fying sight. The thought that the street was to supersede the parliament was hardly reassuring. Withal there is no escape from the impression that these masses are united and moved by an elementary fanaticism whose effects are incalculable.

2

Aboard the *Helouan,* a comfortable Lloyd steamer bound from Trieste for Alexandria, we enjoy some blue, sunny and (except for a little seasickness) happy days. A sea trip in our day is certainly a most refreshing experience. Instantly one is freed from the constriction of the daily grind: "one is beyond time and space." In the embrace of a delicious quietude our thoughts dissolve wishless into the faraway and the soul takes wings. Were I a neurologist I should invariably advise patients (able to pay for it) to undertake a voyage by sea, no matter where it led to. Someone has said, wisely, "The ship is more wonderful than the shore."

It seems strange to be on the way to Egypt, to age-old Mizraim, a land I have known so well since childhood. In my mind's eye there is a picture of the

long winter evenings which an eight-year-old boy spent in the exciting study of the first and second books of the Pentateuch. How goodnatured and lenient was our Bible teacher, the old *melamed* with his hopelessly tangled beard, when we poor devils sometimes stumbled over the difficult Hebrew words! But what the juvenile brain often failed to grasp the prescient soul guessed. Eagerly we accompanied Joseph on his way with the Ishmaelite merchants to the land of the Pharaohs. The youthful imagination envisaged Pharaoh and the Egyptian court, the luxuriant country and its prosperous people, the pleasant prison and its dreamers, the fat and lean kine on the banks of the Nile. Joseph's rise to the rulership of Egypt was food for rejoicing, and the disclosure of his identity to his brothers prompted happy tears. Cruel Pharaoh, who made the poor Jews build Pithom and Raamses, became an object of detestation and when Moses and the children of Israel issued safe and sound from the Red Sea there was jubilation. Such reminiscences make the glorious days on the *Helouan* seem like a return to the land of one's childhood, and the boy's dewy-fresh dreams awaken to life.

After steaming for twenty-four hours we anchor

in Brindisi, a joyless port, so dirty and poor as to be striking even in Italy, the blind and crippled in evidence, with dusty palm trees and some modest memorials. The journey presently becomes serious business and less pleasant. "The vernal equinox," says the captain significantly. The dining-room tables are laid for dirty weather, with a wooden rack to hold the dishes fastened at each place. But the wooden racks in the staterooms find favour just now, for the number of hungry passengers decreases with each meal. Sufficient time remains to me to catch a glimpse of the Albanian mountains; we glide past the Greek isles of Corfu, Cephalonia, Zante, spots that glow in a quiet light, and to which distance lends the illusion of happiness. We pass turbulent Cape Matapan and as we near Crete whose waters have a bad name nobody is longer able to hold his ground. The promenade decks and the attractive social rooms are now still and empty. The *Helouan* lives through some bad hours.

On the fourth day out the sun shines again; the balminess of spring suffuses the calm air. The decks are once more animated, greetings are exchanged between fellow travellers and table companions. Soon the Nile delta becomes visible and

the flat Egyptian shore emerges. Slowly the ship enters the harbour of Alexandria and is assailed by a deafening din. It is the Orient's welcome. A swarm of turbaned figures hop aboard the steamer, hallooing, shrieking and gesticulating excitedly. The ship has suddenly become a madhouse. All and sundry—passengers, hotel runners, porters, baggage—are entangled. It is an agreeable surprise finally to discover oneself and one's belongings in the large customs hall near the harbour.

3

Alexandria is one of the most historical cities in the world. Though comparatively young, and unable to boast a past of five thousand years like other Egyptian cities, it has seen civilizations, peoples, and religions come and go; its every cranny is filled with historical memories. Modern Alexandria offers little of interest to the visitor. An automobile trip suffices for the city's sights. The drive leads across the Place Mehemet Ali, through the European centre of Alexandria, to Minet el-Bassal, a district of the city in which the world's cotton trade focuses.

Not far away is the headquarters for the export of grain, sugar and, above all, the world-famous leek for which the Israelites, heavy of heart, already yearned on their journey through the desert. Then there is Pompey's column commemorating the victory of Christianity and the destruction of the pagan temple, the Serapeium. The impression in its totality is that common to all Oriental cities: noise, dirt and stenches, narrow streets difficult to negotiate, furtive, often dubious figures.

Behind this workaday Orient there are glimpses of the glamorous Alexandria of bygone ages. The first beacon on record, the landmark erected by Ptolemy II, the founder of the entire race of lighthouses, stands on the nearby isle of Pharos. This Ptolemy caused the establishment of another kind of lighthouse, too, intended to shed its light over the whole world. According to tradition he assembled seventy-two Jewish scholars on this desolate island, six from each of the twelve tribes, that they might translate the five books of Moses into Greek. Every day (thus the Letter of Aristeas runs) each one, independently, translated a portion of the Torah, whereupon they met together to compare translations and select the

best version. It is true that this legend is disputed. But it is certain that this first translation of the Bible into a foreign language, the Septuagint, was one of the most portentous events in the history of our culture. This achievement in translation was the first in world literature to link the peoples together. For the first time, Judaism and Hellenism met, and the progress of civilization up to our own time is due to the fertilizing influence of that contact. With the Septuagint the successful fight of monotheism against paganism began on this venerable soil. Hellenism fared forth from these shores on its conquest of the world. The neo-Platonism which nourished Jewish and Christian mysticism in the Middle Ages was cradled here. And here the largest collection of books of antiquity was amassed, subsequently to be utilized as fuel for the public baths by Caliph Omar on the ground that all that man needed to know was contained in the Koran.

Alexandria occupies a special position as the earliest and largest Jewish community of the Dispersion. According to Flavius Josephus, Alexander the Great himself laid the foundation of this community by removing a large body of Jews from Palestine to his capital and granting them full

citizenship. Under the mild rule of the Ptolemies the Jewish population grew in numbers, the Jews adopted the Greek language and Greek culture with lively interest. In connexion with the translation of the Bible a rich Hellenic-Jewish literature in Greek sprang up, its most prominent representative being Philo of Alexandria. In the third century before Christ a gigantic synagogue arose here, vying in beauty with Solomon's temple, which (as the Talmud has it) was so vast that a flag signal was necessary to warn the worshippers when to affirm the benedictions with the prescribed "amen." This Alexandrian community reached its zenith under the rule of the Romans; before the destruction of the second temple its numbers are said to have run into the hundreds of thousands. The present Jewish community of Alexandria has well organized schools for religious instruction as well as model social welfare institutions. Its members occupy a respected position in public life.

Filled with thought-stimulating impressions, one departs from this memory-laden city with eyes lingering on the past. The train to Cairo runs through the blessed valleys of the Nile land. Long strings of laden camels are seen on the roads. Now,

as in the past, they tread their monotonous way in patience and melancholy, as if nothing had changed. The heavy-hearted wisdom of Job applies not only to man: all creatures are born unto trouble.

V

Spring in Cairo

Like an enchanting scene in a fairy-tale Cairo reveals itself on the white glow of the horizon. Encompassed in Africa's radiant sun, shimmering in gay colours, humming in a myriad-voiced drone, articulate in multifarious languages, confessing to widely different religions, embracing the ancient and the ultra-modern: Pharaonic cult of the dead and current fashions in pleasure, pyramids and big finance, detached, unworldly contemplation and avid toil, East and West, desert and Paris, a microcosm,

the entire world in little—such is Cairo. In the morning one crosses the threshold of the liveliest of Oriental cities that claims a history of 3500 years, and in no time at all this indefinable atmosphere has done its work. You inhale the hot desert air of Africa, as caressing and enervating, cloying and intoxicating as opium. There is a balsam-like relief, a something that soothes overwrought nerves, in this African air. You get a pleasant sensation of physical and mental well-being. Depression and fatigue disappear and you find yourself superior to the banal antithesis of dull and amusing; you feel as if afloat in pure delight. Quite suddenly the incredibly narrow streets of the Arab quarter with their indescribable coating of dirt, alive with a mobility that stuns the senses, appear round about. The heart of Africa and Cairo beats here; it is the genuine Orient, primitive and indestructible, mysterious and fantastic, unchanged for thousands of years; the hot breath of the awakening Arab world is more evident here than anywhere else. One is hopelessly hemmed in by the variegated rabble, beasts and vehicles, pedestrians and riders, tooting automobiles, hallooing coachmen, camels and donkeys,

trucks, trams, perspiring Bedouins, stealthily-moving shadows of Arab women, blind beggars, water-venders with goatskin pouches slung across their backs, singing *Hemali,* selling refreshing orange-blossom juice. The distinction between footpath and roadway, between men and beasts, disappears, and this entire moving mass seems to rock to and fro in oscillating rhythm in the seething cauldron of the street, with patient persistence, in fatalistic submissiveness to God.

In the thick of this indissoluble throng ambulant restaurants bob up offering Oriental titbits; the air is heavy with the odour of fresh vegetables, pieces of fish and fried meat-balls. The noise is deafening. A thousand voices criss-cross, drowning one another. From all sides come the long-drawn *Yallah!* (forward) and the coachmen's incessant *Riglak!* (look out); the beggars whine persuasively, *Ya Rabb! Ya Mohannin!* (O Lord, O Merciful One); venders with stentorian voices call their fruits and sweetmeats melodiously; the severely tried tourists defend themselves despairingly with their freshly acquired *Mâ fish!* (no, nothing); and from hundreds of minarets the muezzin's monotonous call to

prayer is heard five times daily: *Allâhu âkbar! Heija alal fálâh!* (Allah is the highest! Come ye to worship!)."

But of paramount interest in this freshet of visions, sounds and odours, is the Oriental man who has blossomed out of this glowing yellow soil and has been shaped under this warming, protecting, life-giving sun. These blackish-brown, powerful figures in white, green or red turbans, in yellow, green, white, pale-blue *burnous* are at once grotesque and respect inspiring. They seem like creatures of balanced mould, uncomplicated and genuine, the raw primitive material and yet, in certain respects, also perfected. They represent a paradoxical blend of activity and indolence; they are goodnatured and cunning, avid of life and contented, enduring and patient like their camels, brooding and worldly-wise, bound by tradition, firm in their faith. The man of the East is religious in a more profound sense than the man of the West. Religion is the form and content of his life, Allah is his ever-present companion, the prayer is his everyday language. The mosque, with its arcades, courts and fountains is to him more than a place of worship; in it he spends part of his leisure, he finds coolness and peace, he gives ear to

wise proverbs and colourful tales which afford him the purest joy. The Koran is the centre of life, it is the source of his strength and guidance, it provides his simple philosophy of life, that passive fatalism which he cloaks in words hard to translate: *Kismet, Kef, Yavash.* The secrets of life are Allah's concern; anyhow, they are beyond mortal man; to attempt to outwit Kismet is futile. The highest we may attain is the enjoyment of the peace of life—Kef —in comfortable contentment. And above all, Yavash, Yavash: slowly, slowly, there is no need for haste. The doctrine that time is money, so devastating to happiness, is hateful to him; time is life, our lifetime is here to be enjoyed. The enervating torridity of the South and the theology of the Koran have been sponsors in common to this self-complacent philosophy of life.

2

In the heart of the Arab quarter, next to the picturesque Sharia el-Halwagi, street of the bookshops, rendezvous of Cairo's Arabian scholars, the Azhar mosque rises. This mosque, an important architectural specimen of the Fatimite period, is one

of the oldest universities of the world and the largest institution of learning in Islam. Reverentially I enter this sanctified place in which, during generation after generation for a thousand years, the Koran has been recited and expounded. In these great halls, arcade-surrounded, Islam lives its own life, woven into the sophistical, fine-spun speculations, that are stretched on the incomparable verbal virtuosity of the Arab. Much of this seems familiar to me; the sights and sounds are reminiscent of the Talmud Judaism of eastern Europe which would appear to have retained a larger proportion of Oriental values than one is generally inclined to believe. There is the same spiritual hypertrophy, the same one-sided religious education, the same life-encompassing piety. I encounter venerable figures that are akin to the mystics and Talmudists of the ghetto; ascetics and meditators with domed foreheads, inward-gazing eyes and the spiritual poise of seasoned knowledge. In a more comprehensive sense than the other mosques El Azhar combines worship and instruction. An opportunity to observe Islamic public education presents itself in the court (*machn*). Hundreds of cross-legged boys and girls surround their similarly squatting teachers between the arcades.

The subject of the teaching is the seven verses of the first sura of the Koran (corresponding to the Lord's Prayer) and the recitation proceeds simultaneously, the respective groups ignoring each other's proximity; the teacher spells out the words and the pupils repeat them at the top of their voices, tittering in self-satisfaction to the accompaniment of the common rhythm of their swaying bodies.

I enter the monumental sanctuary, the principal lecture hall of the university, where students assemble by the hundred; the instruction by many professors, sheikhs, going on at the same time. (The student enrolment sometimes exceeds 10,000; the teachers number 500.) Just now it is comparatively quiet. It is the day before Ramadan, the month of fasting, and only a few knots gather about the columns. They are a singular type of student, these thin, black-bearded, sallow young men with glowing eyes and eloquent mouths. An old Islamic scholar expounds a text from the Koran to those about him; I understand very little but the waving hand and twitching fingers indicate the casuistic extremes of which this humble man is capable.

Surrounding the sanctuary are a dozen *Riwaks,* the students' sleeping quarters and studies. They are

allotted according to province: one each for the Syrians, Bagdadians, East Africans, Sudanese, etc. The rooms are as bare and unadorned as prison cells. The bed consists of a straw mat on the floor. A locker is provided for the student's meagre wardrobe. Bread, supplied daily at the expense of the Egyptian government, is the staple article of food. There will be an occasional feast when one of the men, better off than the others, brings leeks, tomatoes or cucumbers to the cell. Tuition, board and lodging are free.

In the cool, high-vaulted library where rare, illuminated copies of the Koran are visible behind protecting glass, I find opportunity for a suggestive conversation with the learned librarian about the neo-Islam movement. El Azhar, now so placid, has been, for decades, a religious battlefield on which literal orthodoxy and theological modernism contend. The battle inside these walls is in reality nothing more than the ancient, world-wide opposition between rigid ritualism and living religion which has dominated all religious development since the prophets of Israel. In the 1880's Cairo became the focus of the neo-Islamic theology which aims to remove from the Koran tradition the casual, strictly contemporaneous, while preserving and developing

its absolute, imperishable values. Mohammed Abduh, later principal of Azhar and Chief Mufti of Egypt (he died in Alexandria in 1905) was the founder of this radical modernism; the *Manar* (Lighthouse), a magazine published since 1897, is the leading organ of the Abduh school. Its editor is Mohammed Reshid Rida, one of Abduh's disciples.

The tendency of this modernism is discernible in the following quotation from Ameer Ali's *The Spirit of Islam* (Calcutta, 1902): "Religious practices have given way to the tricks of the professional conjuror; a series of ceremonies has replaced the works of earnest piety. Enthusiasm has been stifled and devotion to God and his Prophet have become empty words. The Moslems of our day are ignorant of the spirit because of their hopeless love of the letter. Instead of living according to the ideal that the Master preached, instead of striving to excel in good deeds, instead of 'loving God and, for the sake of his love, his creatures,' they have become slaves of opportunism and external observance." This is suggestive of the lines of thought on which passionate disputes are waged inside the Azhar arcades. As may be seen, an ancient clash of thinking. In Islam Al-Ghazali gave voice to similar ideas 800 years

ago. In Judaism, 2500 years ago, the prophets of the Bible—above all, deutero-Isaiah, the exile prophet —uttered imperishable declarations on the right manner of worshipping God (cf. Isaiah, 58, *et seq.*).

It seems appropriate here to paraphrase Goethe's words: "To such an Islam we can all subscribe."

3

Next to Cairo it is the desert that supplies the pre-eminent experience. True, I did my utmost to perform the duty of an honest tourist by visiting the starred sights. Nevertheless I could not escape the notion that a quiet hour in the desert might yield more lasting impressions than hurrying through museums and the obligatory two dozen mosques. I must admit that in Gizeh I almost forgot the pyramid of Cheops, the Sphinx and the royal tombs, so utterly had I given way to the solemnity of the infinite silence. The desert causes our otherwise so-important everyday to evaporate, nothing remains of our small differences and conventionalisms. The atmosphere is charged with something of the eternal mystery of

the universe; burning sun, lambent air and glowing yellow sand, sand, sand. . . .

I had no luck with the pyramid of Cheops. I ascended as all tourists do: three robust Bedouins assisted, two of them seizing my hands, the third pushing me from behind. But three minutes of this sufficed and at my request they piloted me down again. Placed thus before the meaningless stone colossus I thought painfully of the "four thousand years that looked down" upon me; but I felt that these were dead millenniums with sightless eyes. There is something baffling about the utter extinction of so powerful a civilization with this residue of lifeless masses of stone made one by geometry and sweat, megalomania and cruelty.

On the site of Heliopolis, the ancient Pharaohs' city of the sun, the biblical On whence Joseph fetched his wife, Asenath, daughter of Poti-Pherah, the sun-priest, zealous Belgians have profaned the majesty of the desert by building a modern city with ill-planned streets and barbaric structures. In the midst of this New Heliopolis that is growing at an American pace the Grand Hotel rears itself, an imposing marble edifice equipped with the latest

improvements, which ill comport with the rarefied atmosphere of the surrounding desert and its Pharaonic relics. The hotel is a meeting-place for international snobs whose special amusement it was to "shimmy" out in the glowing desert sand. I got more out of a hasty visit to Fostat, "the old city," with its Jewish memories that were particularly interesting to me. On the way there, along the Nile embankment, my chauffeur who evidently knows his Bible shows me the spot where Moses was taken from the water by an Egyptian princess. In Fostat's newly-restored Esra-synagogue, situated in an ancient alley, they display a marble slab thus inscribed in Hebrew: "Here Moses came by order of Pharaoh to pray to the Lord, as it is written in Ex. 9: 33." Near by is the oratory of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Rambam) a worthy memorial to this great Jewish philosopher, scholar, and physician in ordinary to Sultan Saladin in the XII century, who, after the flight from his native city Cordova, was inspired to immortal works in this remote spot.

On the way home I skirted Charud al Jahud, Cairo's Jewish quarter, which adjoins Charud al Karait, inhabited by the Karaits, a Jewish sect which rejects the post-biblical tradition. It is the dirtiest,

noisiest, most picturesque ghetto I have ever laid eyes upon. By comparison Nalefki, Warsaw's ghetto, seems almost like a villa suburb.

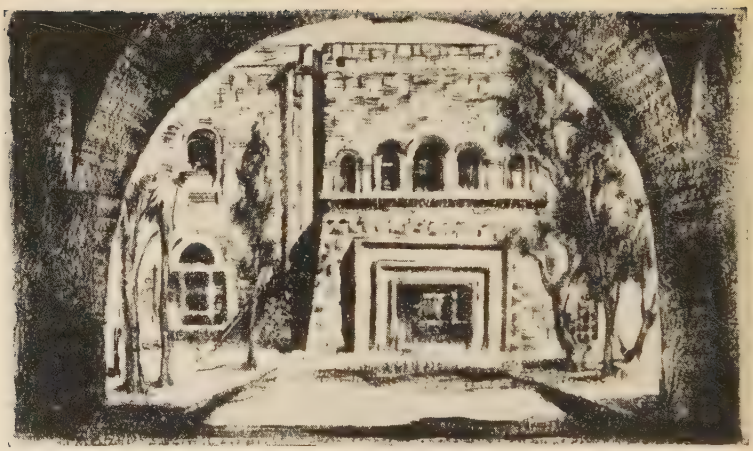
4

Those were arduous days with a truly bewildering wealth of impressions, too profuse to be instantly digested and classified. The picture passes through kaleidoscopic transformations: the loveliness of the Nile landscape, the overwhelming treasures of the Egyptian museum, the cold splendour of the mosques, the incredibly lively trading at the bazaars and, especially, international Cairo on the other side of the Ezbekia Gardens, with its extreme smartness and elegance, its confusion of tongues and its ultra-fashionable hotels. These are besieged from morn till eve by a literally invincible horde that gives the guests hardly breathing space: picture-postcard venders, long-bearded, noble and ascetic of countenance, garrulous guides who speak a medley of many languages, photographers and chauffeurs, rug dealers, youthful shoeblacks and, in greatest abundance, beggars, cringing and insolent, sick and feigning sickness, blind and pseudo-blind.

Towards evening I mounted the elevation to the minaret of the venerable Tulun mosque. Parting with this unforgettable city is like taking leave of one who has made himself dear and with whom one has spent a happy season. From this coign of vantage the broad prospect is fascinating. Behind me rises the citadel in shimmering splendour, the picturesque slopes of Mount Mokattam in the background. Before me the impressive silhouettes of the Gizeh pyramids shine in the distance. And in the foreground, all about, Cairo unfolds itself, a sea of houses, palaces, temples, with hundreds of minarets and royal tombs, in thousands of colours; a town of millions, overflowing with power, full of noise, movement and ebullient life.

In the compact mass of houses one affects to discern two buildings that symbolize this Eurasian city: one is the Hotel Semiramis, attractively placed on the Nile embankment, with its international patronage, its dancing and light-hearted revelry and gay colours. On the other hand there is Azhar with its quiet, bare rooms and its musing men. They are two separate worlds, emblems of Orient and Occident. "What is truth?" Which of these worlds is closer to the meaning of life? Personally, I found

the spirit of Azhar more akin to my soul. In the *Semiramis* I felt something of the increasing decivilization and disintegration of modern life, but the sanctuary of Azhar expressed with a solemn pathos, a profound conception of life, breathing the divine fire that warms and illuminates.



VI

Tel-Aviv

Towards evening I leave Cairo and after a few hours by rail my friends and I are in a special boat being ferried across the Suez Canal, the narrow strip on which Asia and Africa border. At Kantara, on the other side of the canal, a comfortable train, with irreproachable sleeping-cars and with a Hebrew-speaking crew, awaits us. Already upon first contact with Palestinian Jews the great change in the mental attitude of the immigrant colonist becomes perceptible. I meet the common run of people, but

their air conveys something uncommon and holiday-like. It is evident that they have already had time to shake themselves free of ghetto dust; they are undergoing a metamorphosis. Officials, conductors, porters, all speak Hebrew; this I had been aware of previously. Yet a sense of wonder is present when, at a prosaic railway station, the first evidence is offered of the rebirth of one of the most ancient languages of the human race, which for two thousand years has maintained an almost subterranean—or rather super-terrestrial—existence in tomes and prayer-books. These people seem particularly sensitive to Hebrew as a tongue and as an emotion; that is to say, the employment of the sacred language in daily life sheds a glow of sanctity and historical nobility over their existence, they are conscious of personal participation in Judaism's common culture. This is an almost greater wonder and it takes me by surprise. It would seem that these ghetto refugees have done more than merely seek and find personal safety. They have also rediscovered here their vanished cultural identity. This occurs to me during the routine incident to passport examination at Kantara as I respond to the Palestinian frontier official's questions. Asked for my address in Tel-Aviv, I reply that it will be that of

Bialik, and the passport bureaucrat becomes electrified. He is evidently a conscious Jew who, in the leading Hebrew poet of our age, Chayim Nachman Bialik, sees the representative of the rebirth of Jewish culture. Automatically he makes a gesture suggestive of obeisance to the great poet and says, after a pause, "May I ask you to give my respects to Bialik?"

The crossing and the circumstantial passport and customs formalities on both sides of the canal having occupied hours, it was almost midnight before our train got off. Now it hurries on along the Mediterranean coast, across the land of the Philistines to Eretz-Israel. We travel along the caravan trail of Israel and the rich memories of this terrain keep me awake. We cross the northern reaches of the sandy waste in which Moses moulded the slaves from Egypt into a folk with faith and led the children of Israel towards the mountain of revelation. The engine shrieks its way through the primordial theatre of history, the ancient and the modern coalesce bewilderingly and drowsiness begets strange visions in this nocturnal journey through the desert. The next morning at breakfast in Tel-Aviv with my

friend Bialik I transmit to him the homage of the nameless passport clerk at Kantara.

2

There is something thrilling about Tel-Aviv. The first impression on seeing this youngest city is one of amazement and all impulse to criticism disappears in the face of so much that is new and astonishing. At the first blush I do not know whether I like Tel-Aviv, but I admire it. I wander through this thoroughly modern, neat garden city which, in a few years, sprang forth from the Mediterranean dunes at the legerdemain of these Jews from eastern Europe. One walks through friendly and sunlit streets, some of them with the Oriental imprint of dust and noise, others quiet and verdure-set. Neatness and cleanliness are reflected from the villa-like one-family houses inside which carefree people are quaffing their newly acquired happiness without stint. Picturesque avenues extend straight across the main street, one named after Baron Edmond Rothschild, the great patron of Jewish Palestinian colonization. In this lavish splendour of nature, amongst

palms, eucalyptus and cactus, the step-children of eastern Europe meander free and peaceful. There they may once again look up to the sky and revel in God's beautiful world. A large building bearing the inscription: *Ijriah,* in Hebrew, looms up unexpectedly. It is Tel-Aviv's town hall where, from its inception, Mayor Disengoff, a leading citizen, an engineer from Odessa, directed the town's destinies with a firm hand. At present it is a socialist mayor who has the difficult task of piloting the young town across the shoals. A little way beyond there are the modern Selikat brick-works and other industrial plants; textile workers from Lodz now produce here and new manufacturing activities are developing.

In a few years the town has grown with an alarming rapidity which has influenced its development unfavourably. The population which was 3000 in 1919 increased to 45,000 by 1926, in which year there were over two hundred streets. New districts arise, and, with ever-growing conscious aim, the city stretches towards the immense dunes along the Mediterranean shore. Something perfectly new and peculiar has come forth here from a desert: *a Jewish*

city that is not a ghetto. It is the first Jewish city since the destruction of Jerusalem exclusively built and occupied by Jews, by brave people strong in their faith, and who have thrown off the yoke and constriction of the ghetto to make a safe home for themselves and their descendants. One breathes no ghetto air here, there is a plenitude of light and space, and these ghetto-born Jews are on the way to become an erect, straight-backed people. This is the first Hebrew city since the dispersion of Israel. These men and women, coming from different countries and speaking different languages, have found each other at the sound of the forgotten sacred tongue. The Hebrew word serves to neutralize the spiritual dispersion. The scattered people are again reunited by a tie equally strong for its religious sanctity as for its culture-bearing potentiality. All theoretical doubts of Hebrew as a living language disappear after an hour's stroll through the Tel-Aviv streets, where one has difficulty in finding one's way without knowing the language. In the Herzlia school I heard chemistry and algebra taught in the speech of the Prophets; even some Arabian pupils got on famously in Hebrew. The city is still in the making, at its begin-

ning, in transition, partly experimental. It is necessary to be indulgent with the unquestionable lack of style in the matter of architecture, to say nothing of life itself; with the confusion of tongues that is unavoidable at the outset, and especially with the uneven human material. It cannot be said that all the immigrants, without exception, are pure idealists and that they are all equal to their difficult task. The first impressions are more or less perplexing; at this hour of becoming the city cannot be disposed of in a phrase or set in a category. Tel-Aviv is a child among cities and has not yet assumed definite form. But it is a creation rich in promise of future possibilities. This still vague growth inspires respect and a sense of delight: the southern sky, pale blue, roofs the growing communities, the surrounding orange groves send forth their incomparable sweet scent, trees and flowers are luminous in countless colours. Early in the morning young and old, glowing with zest, proceed to their liberating work and, towards evening, happy and singing, they gather at the blue, gleaming sea. The people move in an atmosphere of joy and contentment. There is a sense of something beautiful, vital and upward-striving that dissipates criticism and discontent.

In order to form a proper opinion of this singular town it is well to recall the peculiar conditions of its birth. The history of Tel-Aviv's creation is highly instructive; it reveals the spiritual trait which still predominates in the mentality of Israel. In the beginning of Tel-Aviv was "the word"; literally, this city grew around a school. In 1909, Dr. Metmann-Kohn, a pedagogue, conceived the idea of establishing a modern school for Jewish immigrant children in Jaffa, the first Hebrew school with a European curriculum. Jaffa, a dirty and unhealthy Arabian city, proving ill-fitted for modern education, he purchased land outside the city, on the sea, and there the first Hebrew *gymnasium,* now the Herzlia, was erected. At the start a few dozen families entered their children in the school. In the course of time it became apparent that the children's daily walk from Jaffa to the school was too onerous, so the parents, and teachers as well, decided to move to the new suburb on the dunes. One after another, simple houses for the newcomers rose up near the school. Thus Tel-Aviv began as a small and unpretentious school community, teachers and pupils preponderating in the population, and with the Herzlia institution as its all-dominating centre.

3

These are summer-like spring days in Tel-Aviv. Lord Balfour and his party in Palestine for the inauguration of the Hebrew University are here, the streets and the houses are decorated festively, merry groups displaying flags and breaking into song patrol the gay-looking city. Twenty thousand people greeted Balfour upon his arrival and the old statesman admired the self-discipline and exemplary order that marked this elaborate reception. A pervading sense of elevation seems to endow all the people with dignity; these crowds appear to be under the sway of a moral power which makes the police almost superfluous. There is undeniably an aura of ideality over this young city, which cannot be obscured by its pronounced mercantile and industrial character. On a walk through its streets one becomes aware of its likeness to a living pantheon, for those streets are dedicated to the thinkers and poets of Judaism, past and present. The best names among the great spirits of Israel are represented and flourishing periods of past ages are commemorated. A glamour radiates from these street signs that bear the proudest names of biblical and post-biblical history: David,

Isaiah, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Johanan ben Zaccai, Jehuda ha-Nasi, Saadia Gaon, Jehuda Halevi, Rambam (Maimonides). The stroll through the ages continues to reveal such venerated names. Luminous pages of the history of Jewish literature unfold, from the most ancient preachers and teachers to our contemporary writers and poets who have breathed new life into the apparently dead Hebrew word. It seems odd to enter streets that are named for friends of one's youth, with whom one has walked arm in arm over a part of life's road; here is Herzl Street with the impressive Herzlia school, and here, on the neat blue plates, shine such familiar and beloved names as Achad-Haam, Berdichevski, Bialik, Brenner, Frischman. Touching was the city's solicitude for Achad-Haam, the then grand old man of Judaism, now dead. The aged invalid writer lived quite close to the Herzlia, amidst his books and memories, in a trim little villa, the city's tribute. At times when his illness was aggravated his street was closed to traffic. He was in everybody's mind and all venerated him. Tel-Aviv was proud of its great citizen.[1]

A scrutiny of this new industrial town, whose out-

[1] His house has now been turned into a kind of museum by the town authorities, intended to serve as a study and library for scientists and authors who will continue the work of the deceased.

ward aspect is strongly suggestive of America, yields progressive satisfaction with the strong spirit of historical consciousness which tends to redeem many a symptom of materialism that is alarming. This is, after all, a spiritualized materialism with deep roots in the past, adhering to tradition and inspired, organically welded to a continuity thousands of years old. The street-names in Tel-Aviv are not a fortuitous matter or a whim, they are emblems of the peculiar character of this extraordinary city. They point to the spiritual sources from which the city draws its strength. They testify that the people of this city feel their identity with its spiritual heritage. They are at once a promise and an admonition.

4

I make the notable discovery that the ten commandments are strictly observed in this city. Its daily life partakes of the biblical and patriarchal. The Sabbath is celebrated here as nowhere else in the world. One seems to perceive among the young people a renewal of veneration for fathers and mothers. And what is most conspicuous is that Tel-Aviv seems to be a town without thieves, drunkards, prostitutes,

loafers and beggars. If I was truly informed the city even lacks a real prison. I do not know whether the same can be said of any other city in the world. At the approach of evening the families leave their homes for the shore, but nobody bothers to lock doors. One never encounters anybody on the street who has had too much to drink. Acts of violence and disorderly conduct are not observable. In this industrious spot nobody is as little occupied as the police who rarely have occasion to interfere. To people of our time the sense of familiarity and security is quite unaccustomed. The ten commandments are evidently a perfectly adequate foundation for mutual intercourse if only they be practised. A sanctified tradition can be strong enough to maintain good discipline and order if only the community is willing to live in accordance with it. These observations give me a comforting insight into the purely *moral* possibilities connected with the rebuilding of Palestine. They seem to prove that liberty and not the whip is the most practical means of making better and more moral men. They show me that a dignified life lived healthily on the sanctified, historic soil educates true immigrants to moral self-responsibility and self-control.

One leaves this city with the consciousness that its great and amazing achievements are but a beginning and a promise. This young city is struggling, more than any other town, with difficult social, cultural, economic and technical problems and is seeking the best possible solutions. It has met serious obstacles and must be prepared for unavoidable economic crises. Here, not only is a new city being built but, in a way, a new society. Although Europe is being drawn upon for what is sound and worthy of perpetuation, it is important to be freed of Europe's faults. This youth that produces and builds in Tel-Aviv has left the Talmud schools of the ghettos and the universities of western Europe in order to practise the religion of labour here, but its fever for education and for culture has by no means abated. The Herzlia school is still the intellectual centre of this city. These people feel free from any outside constraint, but they seem the more willing to submit to the moral restrictions ordered from within. It makes one happy to sense these moral aspirations just now when we, in the established seats of civilization, face alarming symptoms of an ever-spreading moral crisis.

Not without an inner anxiety do I take leave of young Tel-Aviv. It is like leaving a child that has

too early been exposed to life's temptations. Shall I, if I should some day return, find this city as I now leave it? Will it have sufficient strength to overcome all its difficulties, to realize all its dreams? God be with you, Tel-Aviv, you promising sapling! Preserve your joy in work, your faith in the new life, your veneration for the spiritual, your adherence to tradition and, above all—your moral purity. Keep what you promise; remain what you are!

VII

Jerusalem: In the Shadow of the Eternal

With throbbing heart I approach Jerusalem, humble and filled with expectation, like a son homebound to a patiently waiting mother. My sensations are those of a pilgrim: I seek neither unusual sights nor sensations. I feel that I am on the way to that which is holy. The profane formula of travel irks me. Hither none should come in a railroad carriage; the solemn stillness of the Judæan mountains should not

be torn by shrieking engines; these place-names, luminous with poetry, should not be degraded by banal station signs. Hither one should advance, as did the pilgrims of the Old Testament, on foot—"loins girded, sandal-shod, staff in hand"—wholly detached from our surface civilization, and with the simplicity of a child, pious, open-minded and penitent.

At last I stand within thy venerable portals, Yerushalayim! I am swept by the untroubled solemnity that envelops thee; I am stirred by the sheer pathos that thou dost radiate. Thy landscape, thy ruins, thy memories, all that thou art, breathe distance, sublimity, festivity, holiness. Thy heights are illumined by a light that my eyes have never before beheld. Thy walls give echo to an organ music that my ears have never before heard. In thy spaces I breath eternity: that which has been and that which is yet to be. Thou art more to me than a place of hallowed ruins, more than "the city of my fathers' sepulchres." To me thou art a *living* sanctuary: concealed, hidden to most—yet alive. Thou art the dormant soil of all that is holy, not the tomb.

As thou wert the scene of mankind's sacred history, so art thou the living source of its hoped-for renewal. Thou art a radiant yesterday and a fateful

morrow. Still, as in the age of the Bible, thou art *Ir ha-kodesh,* the city of holiness, the mighty temple of the world, the capital of religion. Thou art still *Ir-Elohim,* the city of God, shrouded in the shadow of the eternal as in a cloak, a shadow that has never left thee. Thou art both reality and dream, a relic of the past and a presage of the future. Within thy walls one moves both in space and in time. To pace thy streets means to span millenniums; facing thy ruins one sees old generations emerge from the darkness of the past. Yearningly and searchingly I approach thee, tired and disillusioned, hungry and thirsty. I seek from thee an answer to depressing queries, consolation in my deep sorrow, elevation out of my dejection. To me, in my immovable faith in thy undying power, thou art a city of realization. I come to thee in the dawn of our generation, for thou as well as we art awaking to a new day. Thy hour of destiny has come, Yerushalayim—*our* hour of destiny. Is this the winding of the Messianic *shofar?* Is it, perhaps, that the end of time, the *acharit hajamim* of Isaiah, is nearing? The days have an end, a new day breaks, perhaps the day when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the

hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." Unfold thy arms, Yerushalayim, in maternal welcome to thy late-born son who "takes pleasure in thy stones and loves thy dust."

2

The Jaffa train brings me to the Holy City in the noonday heat, and my first sensation is one of bitter disappointment. I feel as if I had been insulted and deceived, and above all else I should like to turn my back on this dire reality that my sweet dream may remain intact. I had reminiscent moments on the short stretch between Jaffa and Jerusalem. The atmosphere is stored with heroism; all that surrounds the traveller seems to be beyond the common, the natural prospect as well as the historical associations. To experience physical contact with a world that has been a lifelong inner symbol or dream is an event of evocative force. Names gilded by legend, dear to me since childhood, appear suddenly before me like flashes of lightning. Here are those unforgettable places where I so often dwelt in thought. Have I not, already at the age of ten, sat at the feet of Rabbi Johanan ben Zaccai here in Jamnia, in this venerable

religious centre where he guided the soul of Israel into safety whilst Vespasian was destroying its body? Was I not confined here in the desolate fortress of Bittar with Simon Bar-Kochba and his heroic band when they—fired by Rabbi Akiba, the godly octogenarian—for the last time in Israel's history sought to shake off the Roman yoke? Did I not join with the high priest Mattathias and his sons, here in Modein, in waging the heroic fight of the Maccabeans for religious liberty? Year after year I wandered on these mountains and under this sky, and I recognize every river and every valley. A smiling corner of my childhood world is alive before me as I traverse the legend-inwoven country of Samson and Delilah, that lies between the brook of Sorek and Artuf, an agricultural colony peopled by Bulgarian Sephardim. Here is Samson's birthplace with the altar of Manoah, here is the camp of Dan where "the spirit of the Lord has begun to move" Samson, and here is Timnath, the theatre of his wonderful exploits. Presently the Judæan mountains are revealed in all their entrancing beauty. They tower, silent and austere, like sentinels at the entrance to the city of the Eternal. The peace and solemnity of a temple court prevail here: one's hands clasp each

other involuntarily in an impulse to prayer and one's soul is tense with anticipation.

Upon arrival at Jerusalem's station this exaltation yields to the workaday world. The stranger enters an unspeakably drab provincial railway station and is instantly surrounded by a dozen shouting hotel-runners, cabbies, porters, money-changers. A motley crowd of gesticulating and bargaining Orientals mingles with the swarming people; priests appear from various points—an endless string of priests of various creeds, wearing exotic headgear and carrying fabulous umbrellas. The Levant charges the air! In this first moment of encounter all is commonplace, dissonant and banal; these mongrel Levantines, these planless, dirty, narrow blind alleys, horrid cinemas —the whole framed in a hurly-burly of stones, dust, camels and spots of hopeless desolation. All this is depressing and disillusioning in the highest degree. Where is the dreamt of Jerusalem that my soul seeks? The evil spirit that I would elude seems to pursue me even to the Holy of Holies. I am completely crushed by this inauspicious entry.

But little by little the hidden Jerusalem unfolds before the visitor's searching eyes. At the hallowed eventide, during solitary walks on the silent heights,

when the starry sky canopies the sleeping city in majesty, the true visage of Jerusalem is revealed to me. Amidst this unreal stillness, in moments of complete withdrawal from the world, I would think myself standing face to face with the Holy City. Then I saw Jerusalem, the widow, come out from the dark, lift her veil and turn her sad, questioning eyes on me. Then Jerusalem spoke: Do you seek me, my son, me the city of God, abandoned by all, whilst those below build a new Jerusalem on top of my ruins, a Jerusalem without God?

These moments on the heights of Jerusalem afforded a religious experience exquisitely profound. Out of its consecrated graves the city of the ancient days spoke to me, spoke of prophecies unfulfilled, of hopes frustrated, of an immeasurable inheritance dissipated. Again, the Jerusalem of a new day was manifest to my apprehending soul, a modern Jerusalem radiant in purity, with the re-established mountain of the Lord in its centre, a haven for a Godseeking generation. Out of these visions of the past and portents of the future there comes a perception which develops, with increasing force, into an inner conviction: *Jerusalem is still the capital of religion!* This sacred ground shall once more bear

prophets and preachers. The revival of religion, which is synonymous with the revival of humanity, will in some way proceed from these heights. Jerusalem will be the city of the Lord as it has been since Cyrus, King of Persia, uttered the portentous words: "All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem."

3

Jerusalem is a city *sui generis,* even with regard to its outward aspect. I walk through the crooked streets, through bazaars and shapeless masses of stone, wondering increasingly at a topographical peculiarity that is new to me. Jerusalem produces the effect of a city of pronounced rural character. Although in a capital, one has the feeling of being in the country. It is as if a group of villages had been assembled to form a town. The streets do not, as elsewhere, serve to integrate the place. The various districts are isolated, each as much by itself as an oasis in a desert. Desolate, unbuilt areas wedge these village-like communities apart, while the surrounding hills operate to preserve their union. This odd mixture of city and

forlornness is bewildering. One wanders through thickly-peopled places in which the usual Oriental turbulence is manifest, and of a sudden becomes aware of a surrounding waste, of rural solitude and quiet.

Does this relate at all to Jerusalem's place in world history? Walking inside the walls of the old town I ponder the question of city and country. It is a truism that religions grow more readily in the country and that material civilization thrives in large cities. Jerusalem spreads amidst God's beautiful and abundant nature; the congestion and artificiality that characterize cities, the moral poison and the mental shallowness, are absent. Also as landscape Jerusalem is a city in the shadow of the Eternal. The broad sky and clear air contribute to a sense of God's nearness. It is a city with the rural blessings. Amidst all the motion life is idyllic. Amidst the bustle of the day's occupation freedom and quiet reign. Set beside the noisy officiousness of the bazaars are nature's order and peace.

Is it likely that King David had prevision of the city's appropriateness to religious contemplation when he and his thirty thousand men brought the ark of God to Mount Zion and chose Jerusalem as the

capital of Israel? Here I perceive better than before the relation between natural surroundings and mental activity, and here the high degree in which the large city antagonizes both religion and true culture becomes even more evident to me. The problem of building garden cities about our industrial and commercial centres is, in its profounder sense, one of religion and morals. To investigate the relationship between the development of religions and climate would prove a grateful task. A climatological history of religion has yet to be written.

I read the well-known passages about Jerusalem in the Holy Scripture and I think I comprehend their true significance better than heretofore. One of our psalmists has plainly noted the country-like plan of the city: "Jerusalem," he says, "is builded as a city that is compact together." Elsewhere the singer sees Jerusalem as deriving its character from its magnificent and extensive hilly setting—"the mountains are round about Jerusalem." Nehemiah arriving in Jerusalem on behalf of the King of Persia expresses astonishment at the city's great size and its desolation—which is not altogether attributable to the destruction. "Now the city was large and great," Nehemiah writes, "but the people

were few therein, and the houses were not builded." None has more movingly given voice to the religious atmosphere which this rural city radiates than the exile psalmist in the sublime Forty-Second Psalm which expresses his longing for the city of his birth, whose memory is one with the cosmic-religious moods he has there experienced: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts— Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

Nobody presented Jerusalem's fate and adventures throughout the ages more clearly, and nobody believed more firmly in the indestructible vital energy of that city than the exile prophet Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. . . . In the day thou wast born . . . thou wast not washed in water . . . thou wast cast out in the open field . . . in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee: In thy blood, live! . . . I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine."

The prophet describes Jerusalem's faithlessness and the severe judgment of the Lord. But he predicts the reunion: "Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant . . . that thou mayest remember, and be confounded . . . when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou has done. . . ."

I walk amongst the tombs of psalmists and prophets, and read repeatedly the Scriptural words about the uniqueness of Jerusalem. Through thousands of years it appears to have preserved, in the main, its original, peculiar character, nothwithstanding all the ravages and changes to which it, more than any city on earth, has been exposed. And all that a groping Jew of today apprehends of the innermost mission of Jerusalem and of its future seems to be confirmed by the laconic intimations of the Holy Scripture.

4.

I often ascend Mount Moriah, my sacred mountain. To me its height is the centre of Jerusalem, perhaps the world. I have a sense of liberation at

every opportunity to leave the modern city, this aborted embryo of a city, anæmic and sleepless, with its stifling atmosphere, its pinchbeck civilization and its intolerable noise, which even the night fails to subdue. Merely to leave the hotel is like gaining freedom. The livelong day one is surrounded there by chauffeurs, guides, shoeblacks, picture-postcard pedlars—the whole swarm of Oriental tourist parasites who swoop down upon every hotel guest, like birds of prey, and proffer everything under the sun. In the foyer the tourists assemble for five o'clock tea. Snobs from all over the world are seated here, drinking and smoking, listening to the most banal of music and filling the air with the commonplace tourist patter about purchases, excursions, exchange and politics. They seem to be incurably afflicted with the disease of civilization. Jerusalem has nothing to offer them, the sacred does not touch them, they do not walk here in the shade of the Eternal. They are carping at Jerusalem which, in truth, is no city for the tourist. There are no signposts, no tramways, no city directory, no pleasure resorts and—genuinely distressing—there is no water.

And so I leave the tourists to their own devices—music, shoeblacks and all—hurry as fast as I can

through colourless Jaffa Road with its third-rate shops, exchange- and tourist-offices, cinemas; past the drab headquarters of the Palestine Executive Committee (I am annoyed, every time I pass, at the thought of a Jewish central office in Palestine in a setting harmonizing so little with the inner sense of the work of rebuilding) and enter the old city by the Jaffa Gate. Presently I find myself in a narrow street of bazaars, hemmed in by an impenetrable throng of sellers and buyers, strangers from the four corners of the earth, priests of all creeds, by Mohammedan, Christian and Jewish pilgrims in variegated attire, porters, camels, donkeys and horses. This bazaar is a world in itself, filled with seething life, replete with passions and excitements. The whole of human life *in nuce,* the entire range of human hungers for good and evil, is represented on this incredibly narrow strip bordered by rows of miserable shops in which everything imaginable and unimaginable is bought and sold. With surprising suddenness I find myself in the open, before Mount Moriah which rises in all its lofty beauty like a vision from a shadowy fairy world. What an abrupt transition, what a bewildering leap from the everyday to the sublime! To be on the threshold between the bazaar and the temple

place is like standing between two spheres of life that differ absolutely in spirit. The change from one rhythm to another is startling. Inside the market the agitated rhythm is that of the everyday Orient, tumultuous, vehement, bubbling over, torrential, like water breaking into a succession of cascades. But out here, on this spot which seems to command the earth, lambent in the reflection of a thousand truths, hallowed by the traditions of three world religions, the mind readily identifies an imagined faraway resonance with the quiet, undulating rhythm of the Universal. The voices of past generations speak to us here of torturing problems and unanswered questions, of abundant mercy and unrequited longings. The cherubs of the Ark of the Covenant seem still to hover about. I pause here at the fountain which refreshes us all, and an echo of the infinite melody that touched us all into life becomes audible to me. My gaze passes over and beyond the sky-blue façades of Omar's Mosque and I observe naught but the eternal mountain of God.

How extraordinary the place, what light, what clarity! Whoever that has a receptive mind sets foot on this mountain is met by a surging multitude of memories, scenes and wraiths. Divine revelations,

fantastic destinies, heroic world history, sanguinary conflicts, decline and rebirth, the heights and depths of human capacity—all this and much else has been witnessed by this hill whose age-old back has borne the light-diffusing Mosque of Omar for a thousand years or more. Towering over all that is petty, low and dissembling, free and proud and smiling, this stupendous spot—more sacred than any other on earth —glows in space, a token of the unarrestable flight of man's soul toward the heights. Here, for millenniums, the son of earth engaged in the most painful of struggles, the struggle for his soul, its peace and safety. It was here that people learned to differentiate between good and evil, and here, taken in moments of grace, that they became aware of something of the meaning of life. These weather-worn rocks observed man's highest rise toward the infinite; they also observed his deep fall into brutality and barbarism. They beheld the patriarchs, kings and prophets of Israel walk before the Lord. They witnessed Abraham's subjection to the awful trial which was to reveal to him the way that leads from pious acts to submission of the heart. They saw the rise of Solomon's temple, a house of prayer of boundless dimensions that extended its welcome to the

"stranger that is not of thy people Israel." They saw the prophets of Israel preach God's word at the temple gates, the word that was "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." Does not a distant echo of this word resound in our ears to this day, sometimes admonishing and awakening, sometimes comforting and guiding? Here stood Jeremiah, the priest's son from Anathoth, mocked and tortured by the mighty, contemned and misunderstood by the multitude, young, insignificant and modest, one against the many, one *above* the many, a truth-teller in a world of lies, seeing amongst blind, awake amongst the sleeping, one of the loftiest and purest in mankind's gallery of martyrs, in whose heart the word of the Lord "was as a burning fire. He wearied himself to hold it in, but he could not." He stood "in the gate of the Lord's house" waiting for the gathering of "all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord." The garrulous and careless crowd flocked to the temple courts as people gather at a social entertainment, absorbed in themselves and their only-too-human concerns, pleased with their affairs and their conduct, blinded creatures with dead souls, at once despicable and deplorable. But at the portal the light chatter stopped; the human flow

was checked by a loud and vehement "eccentric," evidently a rapturous disturber of public order, one of those undesirables of an older day who press themselves forward where unwanted, and methodically upset people's peace. He speaks of the true religion, that which resides in the heart and not in the temple, of the good deed which matters more than religious ceremonies. There is nothing new or extraordinary in what he says, his truths are those that many know but that nobody bothers to observe—holiday truths, not fit for daily use. "Amend your ways and your doings," he cries out to the impatient passers-by, "and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and neighbour, if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow—then will I cause you to dwell in this place . . . for ever and ever."

I sat there, I do not know for how long, absorbed in a past world, listening to the living voices that spoke from the grave. The Lord's mountain still endures, rising above all that is base and mean; the

soughing of cherubs' wings is still audible; and down below and all about people still walk in blindness and sin and grope their way.

When will a new Jeremiah lift his rousing voice from here to a generation that has strayed?

5

Friday evening I set out, for the first time, to visit *Kotel maarawi,* the old temple's surviving western wall where Jews from all parts of the earth gather in prayer. It is not known when this spot became generally accepted as a centre for Jewish prayer; crusaders desecrated it and the surrounding area to spite the Jews, but in 1517 Sultan Selim allocated it as an inviolable Jewish place of prayer. Now it is constantly attended by Jews at worship—a singular open-air temple glamorous with an incomparable sanctity. This evening a heavy rain descends upon Jerusalem, transforming the streets into fast rising streams. Heedless of wind and weather, however, Jews in Sabbath attire hurry through the narrow, secretive bazaar streets to the place of worship. Rows of blind and crippled, of both sexes, line the road before the wall. Amidst this motley assemblage of Yem-

enite, Bokhara, Georgian, Persian, Moroccan Jews, wearing their native caftans and multicoloured turbans, I face these huge stone blocks before which so many generations of Jews have cried to heaven in their need. It is wrong to denominate this wall as a wall of lamentations; it is in the best sense a wall of prayer. Nowhere in the world have I been the spectator of more intense and more soaring prayer than at this wall. The praying at *Kotel* has nothing in common with the exalted, spasmodic ecstasy of the howling dervishes whom I once saw near Constantinople. This is no religious mob psychosis which shifts the soul into irresponsibility. Nor has it anything in common with the pietism of desperation which, later on, I was enabled to observe at the sacred grotto of Lourdes. There one beholds the hopelessly crippled, in the shadow of a mercilessly approaching death, dazed by the fumes of incense and theatrically staged processions, staring with hypnotized eyes at the crutches of the healed—displayed by way of advertisement—professing to testify to the curative properties of the holy water. Prayer at the temple wall impresses me as the whole-souled, spontaneous outpouring of people who seek God, the prayer of complete devotion and spiritual absorption. Perhaps

King Solomon had this in mind when he said, at the inauguration of the temple: ". . . What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house . . ."

Before this wall, amongst suppliants of different rites and languages, I comprehended with a new certainty the common ground upon which all religious revelations rest, notwithstanding surface differences. Here are hundreds of people, each group with its own ritual, its special forms, its peculiar modulations, even its own pronunciation of the Hebrew language. They do not pray in common but side by side, and apparently quite independently of each other. To the uninitiated the effect must be one of meaningless chaos for it is difficult to discern differences between the groups. They proceeded with their prayers, each group in its own rhythm and paying no regard to any other. To me all of this constituted a suggestive symbol. It is practicable to pursue the path of one's personal religion and yet pray alongside others: alongside, not against. Rites and forms and texts are, at bottom, minor considerations when those who seek God lift their hearts toward the heights. These

clusters, committed to different rituals, perform their devotions in peace, none interfering with another: why should world religions not be able to do likewise? At this moment the western wall seemed to me a symbolic expression of religious tolerance.

A man who stood beside me was the only one who seemed unable to yield to the prevailing harmony. He was a cultivated French Jew, thoroughly loyal to tradition, who, every morning of our common sojourn in Jerusalem, betook himself with talith and phylactery to the temple wall to perform his devotions at that fit spot. His piety was as neat as himself, subdued, even and disciplined. Quite abruptly he ceased his morning worship at the wall. "It became too noisy and shapeless," he explained to me. *"Ce tapage m'embête, je veux dire ma prière en repos."* From his point of view the man was right; he was in religion a man of order, the others were religious ecstatics; his ardour was regulated by the thermometer, they allowed theirs to rise, unrestrained, to boiling point. He and they represented two distinct spheres of religious life, two worlds that understand each other only with difficulty. The one has more religion, the other more religiousness. The one is filled with the religious spirit, the other tries

to fulfil the religious ceremony. The one searches for God, the other is satisfied to have a prayer-book.

My frequent observations at the temple wall yielded some instructive lessons in the psychology of prayer. At these curious services, as formless and casual as the ever-maltreated locality itself, I saw men with soul aglow, completely lost in communion with the Infinite. More than once, here, I felt the vibrations of an archetypal piety.

6

At Passover in the year 5685 (1925) an exalted spirit pervaded Jewish Jerusalem. The elaborate celebration incident to the inauguration of the Hebrew University was not yet over and the flag-decorated streets were filled with thousands of guests from all over the world. An indescribable animation prevailed in the Holy City on the eve of Easter; large numbers of young Palestinian workers, *chaluzim*, who had come from the country settlements to take part in the festivities, paraded the sleepless city with song and merrymaking. I was reminded of the sparkling folk-life of Jerusalem during the festivities incident to the pilgrimages as described in the

Talmud, and the mental images of my youth assumed form before my eyes. I found myself in the midst of the old biblical pilgrimage gaiety and it was as if the vision of the prophet had been realized: "Again there shall be heard . . . in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem . . . the voice of joy and the voice of gladness. . . ."

In the morning of the first day of Easter I walked through the crooked and narrow streets of the Jewish quarter, up stairs and down, through ancient labyrinthine lanes, to the large Ashkenazic synagogue, the so-called "Churva" or "ruin of Rabbi Jehuda the pious." The lane where the synagogue stands is a mass of archaic ruins and has been the resort of immigrant Ashkenazic Jews from eastern Europe for centuries. When the synagogue which had been founded by Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (Ramban) was appropriated for a mosque by the Mufti of Jerusalem in the XVI century the Ashkenazim of the city moved to this nearby dilapidated lane and established a new house of worship. Ukrainian and Polish refugees came here in 1650 after the Chmielnizki pogroms, and, as well, in 1681, a number of families from Poland and Germany led by the mystic, Rabbi Jehuda ha-Chassid (the pious). Their

descendants, often persecuted and always segregated, lived obscurely and joylessly in the mean streets. It was not until 1857 that the Sultan accorded permission to Sir Moses Montefiore, the Anglo-Jewish philanthropist, to build a worthy edifice in the "Churva" and in 1864 the substantial Ashkenazic congregation celebrated its consecration.

In the elevated mood of Easter day a representative group of Ashkenazim from various countries assembled in this house rich in memories; a peculiar excitement was in the air. The service was conducted under the conservative ritual customary to the Jews of eastern Europe, but there was no such burning fervour as marked the devotion at the temple wall. This time all hearts went out to the man who, here and now, embodied the hopes of the friends of Palestine, in whom all saw a living token of Jewish Palestine resurrected. Every eye was on Sir Herbert Samuel, the Jewish High Commissioner of Palestine. He sat on a dais, under a canopy that had been raised for him, beside the respective Chief Rabbis of Palestine and England. Draped in his talith, absorbed in his prayer-book, humble and reverent, he was a figure to evoke respect and homage—every inch a prince. Since Nehemiah was governor in Pal-

estine by appointment of Cyrus, King of Persia, no Jew had held that place. Here, then, sat this successor of Nehemiah, a modern English statesman, amidst prayerful Jews from many lands, the vital core of the grave ceremony; the emotions of the moment were intensified upon his being named in one of the most important liturgical passages, the one which voices the messianic ideal of Judaism. By authority of the Chief Rabbi of Palestine the cantor made special reference to Sir Herbert when he recited the *Kaddish* (a prayer for the dead). At the point at which expression is given to the hope that the name of the Lord shall be exalted and sanctified "during your lifetime and in your days," he adds, "and during the lifetime of Governor Menachem ben Elieser," (the Hebrew names of Herbert Samuel and his father)—a distinction so rare as to have been accorded no man in Israel since Rabbi Moses ben Maimon in the XII century.

The tenseness of the atmosphere found its climax when the congregation rose, by common accord, midway in the liturgy, an act evidently intended as an expression of their personal confidence in Sir Herbert and their fixed purpose to rebuild *Eretz-Israel*. Although this may seem like a political demonstra-

tion out of place it was actually a gesture of yearning from pious hearts for the re-establishment of the genius of Israel in the Holy Land. It was after the reading from the Torah; Sir Herbert was honoured by a summons, according to traditional practice, to read the chapter of Prophets prescribed for the day, the *Haftara*. He read the Hebrew excerpt with nice pronunciation and expressive intonation. When, in the usual final benediction, he uttered the words, "nevermore shall a stranger sit upon his (David's) throne," the assemblage rose as one man, with evident spontaneity, and echoed in unison: "nevermore shall a stranger sit upon his throne." It struck me that Samuel, the politician, whose demission as High Commissioner had by that time been definitely settled, did not wholly approve this strange imperative; with a face as inscrutable as only an Englishman's can be he gazed at the enthusiastic congregation, paused a moment, only to resume the reading at the point of interruption.

7

Not many days later, homeward bound, I stood in St. Peter's in Rome, amongst tens of thousands of

Catholic pilgrims from far and near attracted to the Eternal City by the celebration of the Holy Year. Just at this time St. Peter's, with the contiguous Vatican, stood out in particular visibility as the unifying and cohesive centre of Catholicism, a pilgrim's goal for millions of the faithful all over the earth. It was quite natural that my thoughts should revert to the Easter service in the "Churva" of Jerusalem. Faithful pilgrims from distant points assembled there, too, on a significant occasion, but the "Churva" was no religious centre. Is the wished for rebirth conceivable without a headquarters for religious union and integration? Over there in Palestine active hands are engaged in vitalizing the dead soil. The hands of *chaluzim* are working miracles, refuting once for all the current belief that Jews are incapable of or disinclined to manual labour. None who has seen the achievements of Jewish toil in Judæa and Emek-Jezreel can longer hold that opinion. This, however, is but one aspect of the situation, and not the one that matters most. It is not the one in which the innermost aim and meaning of the new Jewish Palestine inhere.

A new Israel cannot be erected with the hands alone. Eastern Jews escaping from oppression and pogroms, young Jewish men and women returning to

life and work under conditions of human dignity, the sorely harried Jewish proletariat of eastern Europe exchanging an unendurable, rootless existence for one of healthy and natural possibilities on sanctified, historical ground—all this is no doubt of revolutionary import that cannot be overestimated. But Israel, the universal historic *religious* problem, cannot be solved by economic emergency measures alone, it is something more and different than a question of emigration. The Lord did not cause Israel to wander about the earth through the millenniums and survive tyranny and persecution that a fraction of eastern Jewry be restored to agriculture on the soil of their fathers. The still existent mission of Judaism—and I firmly hold that one exists—can be found only in the range of the spirit: that mission is not yet fulfilled. What Jewish hands have created in Tel-Aviv is admirable, but the spiritual future of Israel lies not in manufacturing plants but in the creation of new religious values; not in Tel-Aviv but in Jerusalem. Is it my purpose to advocate the establishment of a new religious shrine for numberless pilgrims from all quarters? None knows what the morrow may bring. But when I viewed the surging crowds in St. Peter's and felt an almost physical sensation of Rome as the

living centre of Catholicism and recalled the weather-worn ruins around the Ashkenazic temple of Jehuda the pious, my soul called for a new unifying and rallying ground, a place that should stand above individual communities, above rites and sects, an expression for all to see of Israel's religious concord. In this, perhaps, lies the universal significance of Jerusalem revived. Such a centre would give the new Jerusalem a historic meaning calculated to evoke the willing co-operation of our generation and to kindle the imagination of the spiritually minded. Who knows? The proclamation of Isaiah may be pertinent to our day: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

VIII

The Hebrew University

Amidst Jewish delegates from many countries and representatives of many governments, academies and universities, Earl Arthur Balfour inaugurated the newly-established Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. This first day of April, 1925, was, without doubt, a red-letter day in the history of our generation. This day the eyes of the world were turned on the new Jewish Palestine. This occasion, without a counterpart in all annals, has something of that romantic glow of events in world history. Op-

posite Mount Moriah on which Solomon erected the first temple about three thousand years ago, his descendants of our day rear a temple for the spirit of Israel. An historic thread is discernible, winding from Moses to the Prophets and from them to the Tannaites of Jerusalem and the Talmudists of Babylonia and on to the pious commentators of Israel in the Middle Ages through to Achad-Haam, promoter of spiritual Zionism. Age-old asseverations become tangibilities; sacred words of the Bible acquire life. The Scriptures tell us how Israel, from the beginning of its wandering, was equipped with the spirit as its elixir of life; armed only with the Torah this band of desert folk sets out for unknown destinies. "And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan . . ." Moses says to the people, "that thou shalt set thee up great stones. . . . And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law." Isaiah declared 2700 years ago: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"; and two hundred years later the prophet in exile, Ezekiel, despairs of "the house of Israel" which, in the Babylonian dispersion, has become a "valley which was full of bones." But the Lord promises him a renewal of the wisdom of Israel in its own land:

"I . . . shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live."

Ezekiel's prophecy of a spiritual Judaism was fulfilled by Zerubbabel in 536 B. C. and, later, by Ezra (458 B. C.) and the men of the great congregation, the Jews having obtained permission in 539 B. C. from Cyrus, King of Persia, to return home to re-establish the sanctuary in Jerusalem. The second temple is built (in 516 B. C.) ; the Holy Scriptures are assembled and canonized, a renewed study of the Torah becomes the centre of religious life and of the education of youth. Besides the temple of Jerusalem the synagogues of the Exile arise, religion becomes mobile and free of the trammels of territory or state. A spiritual Jerusalem is diffused over the entire earth; the state may be destroyed, the temple may be burnt, but the spirit remains free and invulnerable. In the year A. D. 70, immediately after the fall of the Jewish State, Johanan ben Zaccai saves spiritual Judaism by the establishment of a religious centre in Jamnia, on the coast of Palestine. Ever since then the Torah has moved uninterruptedly from one place to another: from the high schools of Babylon to the academies of Castile, Andalusia and Provence; from the synagogues on the Rhine to the bleak Jewish quarters of Poland; from the Pale of Russia to the

multitudinous communities of America. The wandering people bore its Torah everywhere like a portable spiritual home. The great world about them saw only the wanderers' rags and debasement, it knew only Jewish pedlars or, at best, Jewish bankers. But within the ghetto the light of the Torah shone undiminishingly, like the burning brier bush that is never consumed.

And now the Torah of Israel returned to its source. The religious centre of Jamnia rose anew after about nineteen hundred years in the form of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This was an event of universal import. "May there radiate from here, in future, those lofty conceptions of brotherhood and idealism with which Judaism has been intimately associated through the centuries in spite of all the persecutions to which it has been subjected." Thus the message of the French Government upon the laying of the cornerstone on July 24, 1918.

2

The Zionism of the last score of years, the modern expression of the traditional striving for the reestablishment of Judaism's spiritual home, does not

contemplate a mass return to Palestine. It holds no contradiction of the proved loyalty which Jews profess to their respective states. This movement in no way comprehends abandoning or relaxing the position of the Jews in the lands of which they are citizens, nor any diminution of their civic rights and duties. The immigration into Palestine concerns principally—for political and economic reasons—the eastern Jews and will in no wise affect the present standing of the Jews in the world. Even in eastern Europe, as far as can be judged, the Jewish population will not be appreciably reduced by the outflow to Palestine. For these heavily oppressed people, not least those of Poland who, for some years, especially in 1924–5, under economic compulsion, have experienced an unparalleled impulse to emigrate, the new Jewish Palestine comes opportunely as divinely foreordained salvation for homeless hundreds of thousands. To all of Israel the resurrected Palestine connotes a new blossoming of Judaism's genius on the venerable soil of the Holy Land.

Israel's spiritual tie with the Holy Land has never been broken, and the thought of restoring Jews to Palestine is as ancient as the Jewish dispersion. In the Middle Ages this thought was marked by an ex-

clusively religious emphasis; it is proclaimed by liturgic poets, it occupies a place in the mystic ecstasies of the Cabbalists, it inspires Messianic movements in various countries from the beginning of that period to Sabbatai Zevi, 1626–1676. It appears in Jehuda Halevi, the greatest post-biblical poet of Judaism, as the longing of the soul for its spiritual heritage: "The air of thy land is the life of the soul." In modern times when the Jewish question in various lands—in its relation to the removal of civil disabilities—became a moot subject, the Palestinian ideal changed from religious romanticism to a practical problem in emigration with political and economic perspectives. Nineteenth-century Jewish and non-Jewish writers in England and France presciently announced the concept of a Jewish home in Palestine. Apposite examples are Disraeli in *Tancred* (1847), a novel of Palestine, and George Eliot in her divining novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876), one of the most enthusiastic accounts of Judaism ever written. In 1840 Ernest Laharanne, secretary to Napoleon III, referring to the then current Oriental problem, burst forth with: "The hour has struck for Jordan's strand." (*La nouvelle question orientale.*) Joseph Salvador, a Jewish scholar, in 1830

demanded the convocation of a congress of nations to solve the Palestinian question, and Adolphe Crémieux, at the founding of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1860 recommended agricultural colonies in Palestine that immigrant Jews might return to farming. This resulted in establishing the Mikveh-Israel agricultural school in Palestine. Moses Hess, German-Jewish philosopher and colleague of Marx and Engels, charts these idealistic and practical currents in his fundamental book, *Rom und Jerusalem* (1862), which proceeds on the theory that Judaism's warrant of existence lies in the culture peculiar to itself and in its conception of life as handed down through the ages.

3

The Jewish pogroms in Russia in 1881 invested these thoughts with new life and furnished impetus to the practical work of colonization in Palestine started by the Choveve-Zion (Friends of Zion). Their leader was Leo Pinsker, an Odessa physician, author of the classical book on the modern Palestinian movement.[1] This association founded the first

[1] *Autoemanzipation, Mahnruf an seine Stammesgenossen von einem russischen Juden* (1882).

farm colonies in Palestine, and the first schools, and thereby laid the groundwork for the new Jewish Palestine.

Not until the middle of the nineties do these efforts span a wider range, and then through the intervention of a providential personality, the incarnation of the hopes and aspirations of an entire generation, Theodor Herzl (1860–1904). Before dedicating himself wholly and unreservedly to the regeneration of his race Herzl stood outside the traditional Judaism, culturally and temperamentally. He was a notable poet and essayist of Young Austria, influential as literary editor of the Vienna daily, the *Neue Freie Presse,* and an author of consequence. In Paris, where he represented the *Neue Freie Presse* from the beginning of the nineties he lived through the terrible Dreyfus affair which, to him, personally signalized the collapse of all that he believed in and lived for. He witnessed the innocent Jewish officer's degradation to the accompaniment of the wildest outburst of mob hatred toward the Jews, and in that instant assumed the degradation as his own. Then he went out, like Joseph the dreamer, to "seek his brethren." Stirred to the quick by the tragedy of Judaism he wrote his prophetic confession, *Der Judenstaat*

(1895), which became the point of departure for the Zionist organization created in 1897 at the first Zionist Congress in Basle. This congress formulated the program of Zionism thus: "The aim of Zionism is to create in Palestine for the Jewish people a publicly recognized homeland under legal guarantees" (the Basle Programme). It was to effectuate this declaration that the Zionist organization in Basle was created. It is well known that the first Basle Congress was later misinterpreted in the notorious fraud, "The Protocol of the Wise Men of Zion," according to which a secret Jewish world-alliance, intended to acquire universal supremacy, was formed in Basle. In truth, the congress was the very opposite of mystery-making; it addressed itself openly and honestly to the whole world. As Herzl said at the opening of the congress of 1897: "It is out of the question for us to adopt the way of petty alliances, secret plans and clandestine dealings, but rather only that of voluntary discussion under the stable control of public opinion."

4

The World War brought these strivings closer

to their goal. On November 2, 1917, Balfour, then Foreign Minister of England, made a formal declaration respecting the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine, emphasizing that the position of the Jews in the world was in no wise thereby altered, "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the . . . rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." In this declaration these governments of the Entente Allies joined in 1918: France, Italy, Greece, Serbia; also the United States, and Germany, Switzerland, Japan, China and Siam as well. Further, Emir Feisal, the Arab king, expressed his approval of the Balfour declaration. The peace conference in San Remo confirmed the declaration as part of the treaty it adopted on the 24th of April, 1920. The League of Nations allocated to Britain the mandatory power for Palestine. The introduction to the text of the mandate runs thus:

"Whereas the Principal allied Powers have agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the government of His Bri-

tannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country; and

"Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine. . . ."

This mandate also establishes the official character of the Hebrew language; Article 22 designates English, Arabic and Hebrew as the official languages of Palestine, to be used on stamps, coins and all governmental acts. Likewise, according to Article 23, the Jewish Sabbath and holy days are recognized as legal holidays for the Jewish communities.

5

The rise of Theodor Herzl was simultaneous with that of another conspicuous and leading personality: Achad-Haam (U. Ginzberg), the Hebrew author, one of the foremost thinkers of modern Juda-

ism (1856–1927). In contradistinction to Herzl who saw Palestine as a solution of the political and economic Jewish problem (the question of emigration), Achad-Haam represented a spiritual Zionism. Jewish Palestine was to him but the solution of the spiritual question of Judaism. He perceived in the Palestine-to-be a spiritual centre, where the religious creative work of the prophets, psalmists and Tannaites would be resumed. Those who may return, however few they be, will find in the Holy Land a new heaven and a new earth, unspoiled conditions of life, safety and peace and, above all, outer and—to Achad-Haam paramount—inner freedom. Emigration to Palestine will always be for only a small fraction of the Jewish people; the spiritual possibilities of the country, on the other hand, are unlimited. The Palestinian movement cannot be the solution of the question of *the Jews,* but the existence of *Judaism* can be insured and buttressed by creating a spiritual centre in the Holy Land.

Achad-Haam, seconded by a circle of young Hebrew authors who attached themselves to him, vindicated his theory in the *Haschiloah,* a Hebrew monthly which he founded in 1896 and which appeared until 1925, and in *Al Paraschat Derachim* (At

the Parting of the Ways), his only volume. This spiritual tendency within the Palestinian movement has become increasingly dominant. The inauguration of the Hebrew University constitutes, definitely and tangibly, its conquest.

6

Those so fortunate as to participate in the bright festival days in Jerusalem because of the inauguration of the Hebrew University, will cherish the recollection of a rare and unforgettable experience. Primarily a Jewish event, its implications ramify universally, it promises to affect humanity in general and to cast a refreshing ray of light on our dark age. All that was given us to see and hear in these wonderful days was of a nature to strengthen our faith in man and in a brighter future.

On the afternoon of April 1, 1925, on Mount Scopus, there gathered around the venerable figure of Lord Balfour Jewish and non-Jewish personages from all over the world, professors from about fifty universities, noted scientists, prominent rabbis from many important congregations, Field Marshal Lord Allenby, conqueror of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel,

at that time High Commissioner, Weizmann and Sokolow, the leaders of Zionism, Achad-Haam, since then deceased, the poet Bialik and the Chief Rabbis of Palestine, England and France. The great scene was one of rare beauty and grandeur. The shimmering horizon, the remains of early history, the spectators—about ten thousand of them framing the festival-place—all this blended into a grand effect deeply charged with colour and emotion.

Before us was the highly decorative audience in the specially built stone amphitheatre that holds seven thousand people, and standing in closely packed groups on the adjacent heights, a motley collection from all corners of the earth: high English officials, Arabian sheikhs, Polish rabbis, American business magnates, leading neo-Hebraic poets, including Tjernikowsky and Schnëur, brightly-gowned society ladies and, in the aisles, white-clad young "Maccabeans" of both sexes, the volunteer police in this rolling human sea.

There was enchantment in the view about us. Places made memorable by the Bible—on the right, Mount Moriah with Omar's Mosque, the Valley of Kidron and all of old and new Jerusalem; on the left the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea backed by

the glowing blue Moab Mountains—lay within our vision. Straight ahead was Anathoth where the prophet-martyr Jeremiah was prepared for his calling by his priestly father. Above it all the pale blue sky of Jerusalem shines and the lavish sun of Palestine pours out its abundant blessing over an assembly imbued with the spirit of a great occasion.

At that moment, on that sacred soil, the air was fraught with world history. Earl Balfour could truly refer to the historic and symbolic significance of the place. From this point observers once beheld Joshua leading the early Jews into the Promised Land. Fifteen hundred years later Titus assembled his legions here to annihilate the Jewish state. On this height a new epoch in the life of Israel now begins. Mount Scopus witnessed the beginning and the end of the Jewish state. Now it sees the renaissance of the Jewish spirit.

The inauguration ceremony, lasting several hours, was one of the most intense experiences imaginable. I was firmly possessed of the feeling that at this hour Isaiah's prophecy of peace was being fulfilled: " . . . and it shall come to pass in the last days." And my thought was: Perhaps these proceedings on Mount Scopus this radiant April day mark

a turning point, the approach to a changed relationship between the peoples of the earth and Israel. A spirit of reconciliation was in the air—it was as if centuries of wrong were to be obliterated, as if Christianity were declaring: Now we will begin to understand each other. Something new and bigger was subtly present: Orient and Occident seemed to meet on this eminence, common ground of the nations, ready to give and take. I was under the spell of the exaltation of the moment and indulged in the illusion that my eyes had seen the East and West clasp hands.

This fundamental feeling mastered the speakers and found expression in the devoirs from academies and universities which were afterwards delivered. The climax of the festival was indubitably the large-minded and inspired address of Sir Herbert. Here stood a man of integrity who felt no difficulty in being at one and the same time an Englishman and a Jew, who perceived no incongruity in presenting the good wishes of his government and people while disclosing, enraptured, his emotion upon the consummation of an epoch-making event in the history of Israel. This was not merely an office-holder employing stencilled phrases. It was a devout

Jew, firm in the faith, with an all-embracing view of life, a Jew to whom the words of the prophets are of the stuff of life itself. A British official whose words flame in the spirit of Jewish prophecy! "This occasion is indeed inspiring. . . . In the Middle Ages, they sought the philosopher's stone which would transmute the baser metals into gold. The faith, the enthusiasm, which we see at work in Palestine, they are the true Philosopher's Stone. They have already turned swamps and barren sand into gardens. . . ." And with plain allusion to the hostility of the Arabs to Jewish Palestine: " . . . they will yet succeed in turning animosities into friendships." The speaker referred to the Everlasting Lamp which, for thousands of years, has burned in every synagogue before the Holy Ark containing the scrolls of the law: "Day and night, year after year, century after century, millennium after millennium, that small flame has flickered. How many humble people, in how many countries, for how many generations, have tended it as a symbol. They have lived, and one by one they have died, with hopes mostly unfulfilled, but with faith wholly unshaken. Now in our own day, we seem to see that little flame growing and brightening, till, we hope and believe, it may yet

throw illumination upon the world. Happy are we that in these years have been privileged to tend it. 'Blessed art Thou who hast preserved us unto this season.' " And when the High Commissioner concluded with the benediction, uttered in Hebrew of melodious inflection, something like a current of profound emotion passed through the multitude.

Lord Balfour in his speech paid homage to the teachings of Israel and professed faith in its future possibilities. With his impressive personality and elevated view of human existence this man of seventy-seven made an overwhelming impression on all of us. The spirit of humanity spoke to us from the height of Mount Scopus through these chosen lips.

"If those who entertain that scepticism will only look upon what men of Hebrew birth have done and are doing in the very realms of work to which your University is to be specially devoted . . . they will share the confidence . . . I certainly share in the future. . . . In recent years there have been three theories, which have attracted the attention even of the non-scientific: the theory of creative evolution, the author of it is my friend M. Bergson, a great philosopher and a Jew. Another theory constitutes what is called the new psychology, the author of

which is Mr. Freud, also a Jew. The third theory, the most comprehensive, is the theory of relativity . . . mainly the work of Mr. Einstein, a mathematical and scientific genius of the very first order, a Jew." Balfour has faith in the genius of Israel, in its undiminished creative power. He deems it of moment to humanity that this creative power be maintained and nourished.

The next day, at Government House, representatives of about fifty learned institutions delivered their addresses and felicitations before an invited audience. The previous evening the various consuls in Jerusalem had presented the congratulations of their respective governments at the official banquet in the Russian building. The civilization of the world held out a fraternal hand through its delegates to the ancient Jewish culture. It was as though the envoys from the universities of Amsterdam and Manchester, from the Collège de France and the Royal Society of London, from Baltimore and Boston, from Columbia University and all the others were saying to Judaism: Hereafter we will co-operate for humanity's good. "Orient and Occident," says the address from the University of Geneva, "joining to inaugurate a new intellectual centre in the city of

Jerusalem, accord well-deserved homage to the thinkers and scholars of Israel who, for successive centuries up to the present hour, have contributed and are contributing to the progress of human knowledge in every field." The mockery of the one and the bitterness of the other side vanished in that moment. A spirit of messianic fraternity pervaded this ceremony. Shylock seemed in that instant to have disappeared. A new and better future was looming in the distance.

IX

Where a New Generation Waxes

When I left for the Holy Land a friend said to me, "All that I can wish you is that you may not suffer disappointment." I have really not been disappointed. In the new Palestine I became cognizant of the serious difficulties to be surmounted. I came to learn the privations which await every Westerner over there. I became aware of the spiritual and economic contradictions that are at grips with each other during this arduous period of construction. I saw Arabs, misled and apprehensive, aroused against the Jewish

immigrants who, in all respects, enjoy superior equipment, all the while distrustful of the hateful Western spirit introduced by the newcomers. True, I was familiar in advance with the obstacles normal to an enterprise of such magnitude, and I well knew that modern Jewish Palestine is in its inception, like the draft of a book to be written. But the Holy Land acted on me like a miracle. The New Palestine was no less wonderful to me than the ancient one. Those were memorable days on which I rambled widely over the most recently colonized district, near Mount Carmel, and on the plains of Galilee and came in contact with admirable people who are imbuing the dead soil with new life. In a cursory inspection of these colonies one becomes aware of a new and promising condition whose future possibilities extend beyond the range of this day's vision. And the people, too, seem transformed, liberated from external and subjective slavery, entirely absorbed in a special sort of joy in work and sense of happiness. Throughout the world people work, but here work is like a cult, a service of faith. There is something idealistic and super-personal about this work, it is invested with the glow of a historic mission. It is apparent that these people toil with joy, with enthusiasm, with the

proud consciousness that permeates them all: *Anu bonim et ha-aretz;* "We are building the country!" This joy in work is observable in the young *chaluzim* when attached to a *gedud,* a mobile corps of workers, subject to transfer, tents and all, according to need. This spirit of joy in work and responsibility is noticeable everywhere in the new agricultural colonies; it operates alike amongst the bourgeois small farmers who constitute the co-operative colonies, the Mosch've Ovdim; the Communist land labourers organized in the Kevuzot; and the orthodox peasants—*chassidim*—Polish arrivals of recent years.

Faith in a mission has brought these heterogeneous groups together in common work. Side by side with muscular manual labourers, whose expression is marked with a certain defiance, one finds slender, refined intellectuals, young men and girls of academic training, hardened and sunburnt. Indefatigable, singing, they engage in the most exacting kinds of work, digging wells, cutting stone, building causeways, draining marshes. For many of them the labour is too arduous, to most it is unaccustomed, but all obstacles become surmountable through the

common sentiment: We are building the country!

No less conspicuous is the rare sense of happiness that is often observed among the settlers. Strolling through the streets of Haifa or Tiberias of an evening or rolling across the flourishing farm colonies of Emek-Jezreel in one of the excellent motor cars to be found there, one often comes upon gay companies that sing and dance and fill the air with laughter and merriment. Happiness is almost definitely perceptible here, in this sparkling air and under this gracious sun. For the most part the inhabitants are poor and live most simply, subject to privations and exposed to malaria and trachoma. But their eyes often shine with untroubled happiness. They are like castaways miraculously saved from certain death, landing on a happy island under the smile of a new life. Many of them have come hither direct from the hell of Ukrainia after witnessing the most cruel atrocities that man ever practised on man. Now they are grateful and content, they view their new life as an unexpected gift of grace and are happy to enjoy peace and freedom even if in less favourable circumstances.

2

The project to establish Jews as cultivators of the soil in the Holy Land is older than Zionism and the Balfour Declaration. A plan for Jewish colonization in Palestine was developed in orthodox Jewish circles in Russia in 1860. A few years thereafter Charles Netter,[1] a French Jew, succeeded in founding, near Jaffa, in 1865, the first Jewish agricultural school, which was named Mikveh-Israel. But the colonization movement only got under way in the early eighties as a result of the first Jewish pogroms in Russia. Dubnow, the Jewish historian, properly points out[2] that the two great catastrophes in the history of Israel, the expulsion from Spain (1492) and the first pogroms in Russia (1881) were followed by mass emigration to the Holy Land. The emigration in the beginning of the XVI century from the Iberian peninsula and elsewhere was of a markedly religious character and resulted in urban settlements; the new immigrants organized religious communities and, in some cases, mystic-cabbalistic circles, in Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias and Hebron, and subsisted on doles from the faithful overseas

[1] Deceased 1882 in Jaffa.

[2] *Neueste Geshichte d. jüd. Volkes,* III. pp. 312 ff.

who, later, organized under the title *Chalucka.* The subsequent immigration which began to assume serious proportions in 1882 was of a pronounced agricultural cast and its outcome was the founding of Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine. The first pogroms prompted the establishment in Russia of *Bilu,* this title being the initials of the Hebrew words: "Beth Jacob Lechu Wenelchu!" (House of Jacob, let us go!) It comprised Jewish academic organizations under whose banner pioneers for the new Palestinian colonization joined together.

It was a mighty spiritual rising of educated Jewish youth that could not reconcile the pogroms with the love it had acquired for Russia as a true fatherland. This disappointment of the new generation was expressed pathetically by J. L. Gordon, the leading poet of the Enlightenment and the most eager herald of the ideal of education and of Russian citizenship for Jews. In his poem *Achoti Ruchama,* (My Beloved Sister), 1882, which can be considered as the proper anacrusis of the new nationalistic direction of Hebrew poetry, he says:

> It is well that you are insulted, my soul has suffered all the misery and all the moaning that

has come to her, but this last she cannot suffer,
your shame. Therefore let us go, dearest sister.

True, the poet lighted the way to America, but the Biluists preferred to go back to the Holy Land. Their encounter with the pious Chalucka Jews was a meeting of two different worlds. These Chalucka people had come to Eretz-Israel only to die there: to bewail the decay of the land, to meditate, to await the coming of the Messiah. But the young Russo-Jewish students had come to Palestine to live: to work, to build up the devastated country once more. In 1882 Bilu pioneers laid the foundation of the first Jewish agricultural colony, Rishon le-Zion, situated on the road between Jerusalem and Jaffa. This was a decisive event in the history of the Jewish colonization of Palestine. Baron Edmond Rothschild of Paris, a large-minded philanthropist of uncommon capacity, from the beginning was at hand with considerable financial support. At short intervals the colonies of Rosh Pina in Galilee and Sichron Jacob in Samaria followed. About fifty agricultural colonies of various types arose during the next three decades, assisted in part by *Choveve-Zion,* an organization formed in Russia. But the whole enterprise

preserved a limited and private aspect; no large scale emigration to Palestine could be effected. The Zionist organization that Herzl established was, until the World War, not directly concerned with emigration or colonizing activities.

The systematic reconstruction work begins only after the World War. Balfour's declaration (November 2, 1917) on the one hand, and the collapse of large areas of eastern European Judaism on the other, (particularly the catastrophic breakdown of the economic status in Poland under the rule of Grabski), give rise to a heavy influx of Jews into Palestine. At the same time, two funds, i. e. *Keren Kayemeth,* for the purchase of farming acreage, and *Keren Hayesod,* the foundation for carrying out the reconstruction work, created a magnificent propaganda apparatus in all countries for the collection of the needed funds.

The result of the work accomplished since the end of the war is disclosed in figures quoted from the memorandum of the Zionist administration to the permanent mandatory commission of the League of Nations in May, 1926. In 1925, 33,801 Jews immigrated into Palestine (as against 12,856 in 1924 and 1421 in 1923). During the first quarter of 1926

there were 5500 immigrants. The total number of Jews who have settled in Palestine since the British occupation and up to March 31, 1926, exceeds 83,-000. Towards the end of 1925 the Jewish population of Palestine numbered about 135,000 as against 55,-000 at the time of the Armistice. The largest number from any one country are Poles, about 17,000; the remainder represent Russia and Ukrainia, Rumania, Lithuania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Yemen, Greece, etc. The landed estate of the Jews increased from 90,000 to 100,000 hectares in 1925. At the end of that year there were 100 agricultural colonies of which 44 are administered by the Zionist organization. Urban colonization was no less rapid, the town population of Palestine rising from 85,000 to 114,000 in 1925. At present the Jewish town population is thus distributed: Jerusalem, 42,000; Tel-Aviv (with Jaffa) 48,-000; Haifa, 14,000; etc. The principal industrial centres are Tel-Aviv and Haifa. The quick development of industry is best reflected in the evenly rising consumption of electric power. (According to the latest annual report of the Jaffa Electric Company, known as Rutenberg Concessions, the number of consumers increased from 99 to 185.) There were 21,000 organized labourers at the beginning of 1926.

Public health schemes and, above all, the educational plan and school system, are developing progressively. The enthusiastic Charles Netter and the brave Bilu students did not fight in vain.

3

During my week's stay at Carmel I betake myself daily to the Valley of Jezreel (Emek-Jezreel), the most prosperous Jewish farming district, which is growing at an amazing rate. The valley, which extends from Haifa on the Mediterranean to the plain of Jordan, is the largest in the country. Only a few years ago it was desolate and deserted. Not a single Jew was engaged on its soil. Later on, after the date of the Balfour declaration, the ground was purchased by *Keren Kayemeth* the Jewish land fund, and leased to recent immigrants, whose work here has attained imposing dimensions. One sees, almost literally, new life blossom out of the ruins. All Emek boils with diligence and the will-to-work. A particularly noteworthy improvement was the draining of an extensive marshland which, theretofore, had made the valley of Jezreel almost uninhabitable. In Nahalal (near Nazareth) for instance, sixty per cent

of the population was afflicted with malaria five years ago. A group of *chaluzim* offered to drain the swampy area but on this occasion Baron Rothschild, the untiring patron of Palestinian colonization declined to aid an enterprise which, to his mind, was tantamount to suicide. The hardy young men, natives of the one-time Austrian Galicia, were tenacious. They said, "We'll do it," and they did it. Up to their necks in poison-infested fens for months, most of them the prey of fever and some having to yield their places to substitutes because of sickness, this gang of sixty laboured until the marshes were drained. At Nahalal the leader of the colony offered me a glass of fresh water: "You can drink it safely now," he said, showing me their malaria statistics. In three years the percentage of malarial cases had dropped from sixty to zero. The colony was completely drained, the water was potable and the members enjoyed excellent health.

4

The cultivation of the plain of Jezreel is a highly significant achievement, the pride of modern Palestine. This colonial settlement has attained re-

markable dimensions in a few years. The plain has ever been a link between countries and peoples. The biblical city of Jezreel, winter quarters of the Israelitish kings, was situated here. The site, between the Mediterranean and the Jordan plain, made it the great caravan and army road from Egypt to Syria. It was the theatre of important events in ancient and recent wars. Here, on the river Kishon, Deborah the prophetess and Barak, son of Abinoam, vanquished Sisera and his army, and the victory was glorified in one of the most beautiful biblical songs, that of Deborah, among the oldest examples of biblical lyrics left us. (Judges 5.) Here Ahab defeated Ben-Hadad, King of Syria, (I Kings 20), and here the Jews fought their last, desperate fight against Vespasian (*c.* A. D. 70). In later years this plain saw Napoleon's army which, under Kléber's command, defeated the Turkish army at the foot of Mount Tabor. Today the fight on this spot is being waged with the weapons of peace-time work. Young men and women are conducting a heroic struggle against epidemics and privation, converting the waste into productive fields. The prophecy of Isaiah has come true: swords have been beaten into ploughshares. The Emek now comprises about fifty large and small ag-

ricultural settlements, a very impressive sight. New categories of immigrants have attempted to create new types of agricultural colonies and Emek has become the large social-economic experiment station of Palestine. The Kevuzot, the first large communistic agricultural settlement; chassidic colonies composed of lower middle-class families that observe a distinctive religious life, and Kefar-Yeladim, the first children's colony, one of modern Palestine's most admirable creations, have been established here. In the centre of this reborn Emek, at the junction of the railway lines from Judæa and Galilee, a modern town, Afulia, now in the making, is destined to become the urban centre of Emek, the market for its agricultural products. Afulia, a strategic centre of importance during the World War, was, but a few years ago, a decayed heap of ruins. A company of American Jews bought all that was Afulia and razed what still remained standing; an imaginative city-planner—Richard Kauffmann, a German architect —worked out the scheme and a new city rose on the old ruins. When I visited Afulia in April, 1925, building activity was still in its early beginnings. Now, according to report, it is a finished city in full operation.

5

Far and above all else that I became acquainted with stands the New Man who flourishes on this ancient soil. Contact with these recovered, rejuvenated ghetto refugees afforded me the purest pleasure. It is amazing to see how radical a change they have undergone in only a few years; their life close to the soil, their personal freedom and the imponderable emanations from historic ground, affect them like an elixir of life. It is plainly to be seen that they are entirely transformed, sound in body and soul. One recalls involuntarily the stooping, furtive, driven ghetto types that were once to be encountered in cities of eastern Europe, those unhappy victims of social maltreatment and religious intolerance, and finds difficulty in believing that those step-children of society have been changed into the erect, straight-backed, splendid figures to be met here at every step. The better one gets to know them the greater the certainty that a new Jewish generation is growing up here with sound instincts, self-respect and a sense of responsibility, with a longing in their hearts for a new ideal of life. The soil of Palestine straightens out the crippled body and it heals the sick soul. All that

was distorted, neurotic, unstable, which their rootless existence in the poisonous pogrom atmosphere of eastern Europe engendered in these unfortunate creatures, is disappearing, and with it hatred, rage and vindictiveness. Their whole mind is turned on positive and productive work; they want to build, not tear down. The gracious sun of the South has made them milder, more conciliative, more human. Doctrinairism and blind partisanship and the bone-dry orthodoxy that frequently mark the one-sided ghetto mind seem to give way to a more placid view of life's phenomena. Fanatical communists return, almost unconsciously, to the traditions of their forefathers, whilst others of them observe Sabbath and holy days in their own particular way; the poetry of tradition shimmers over their prosaic dogmatism. Intellectuals with western education who, in the inimical environment of their respective lands floated in a sort of vacuous cultural atmosphere, without firm roots in the soil of the past, now perceive the East that is in their souls. Their foundling culture acquires a colour and tone of its own. At home they were the poorest—spiritually, too—among the poor; here they discover treasures hitherto unthought of. Are they not themselves at once East and West, en-

dowed with the spiritual heritage of the East and the accrual of western civilization! They are living syntheses; perhaps in this union of the Eastern and Western, which is a phase of historical development, lies one of the most important future possibilities of Jewish Palestine.

I was deeply impressed by the new chassidic settlements, Nachlat Jacob and Abodat Israel, both established on property of the Jewish land fund, *Keren Hayesod,* near Haifa. They represent a phenomenon entirely new and unique. One fine day some Polish *chassidim,* adherents of a mystic-hued religious movement founded by Israel Balschem one hundred and fifty years ago, abandoned their modest places of prayer, their ecstatic worship and their tenuous economic state and betook themselves and their families to the Holy Land to become farmers. Many of them were animated solely by religious motives. Now, though engaged—old and young, men and women—in hard and unaccustomed land labour, they yet pursue their mystic meditations and their pious life. Each of the two groups is under the leadership of its *zaddik,* the acknowledged head of the *chassid,* the intercessor between the congregation and God, the elect who knows all secrets and through

whom God works miracles on earth. Together they practice—*chassidim* and the *zaddik*—their religious devotions and together they do their stint on the field. They are extraordinary farmers, these *chassidim* from Jablona and Kozjenitz! In the morning these troops of devout Talmud Jews with flowing beards and earlocks are to be seen on their way to the synagogue where they perform their service under the direction of the *zaddik,* whereafter they read the wonted daily Talmud excerpt or portions from the cabbalistic scriptures and ancient pious books, as was their habit at home. Then they proceed to work; a father is frequently seen with his adult or young sons, a mother with her daughters; but whether they cut stone, build roads, or milk cows they are generally prepared for their period of rest with a book, sometimes *Zohar* (Glamour), the cabbalistic classic. Strange peasants who read the Talmud at morn and recuperate with *Zohar*! We confront a total revaluation of values. Talmud-Judaism and chassidism used to be synonymous with spiritual hypertrophy or other-worldly mysticism; both held physical labour in disdain, true life consisted in learned speculation or esoteric dreaming. Now this world of pietism is overturned. Report has it that this extraordinary ex-

periment is struggling with economic difficulties; Nachlat Jacob, one of the colonies, is said to be disintegrating. But from the moral point of view the chassidic immigration belongs among the most resplendent phenomena in New Palestine. Spirit and labour have here entered into a new covenant full of blessing. The work is crowned by a deepened view of life while the mysticism derives nourishment from earthly reality.

Yet it is the children of Palestine who constitute its most refreshing factor. Unconsciously they grow into the new, better and happier life. They grow up in purity and peace, free and natural, healthy and courageous. They are never exposed to humiliation by Aryan comrades, they need not fear that their faith will prove an obstacle in life's path. From early childhood they learn to work hard, they practise a variety of sports, they spend much time outdoors, they dance and sing. Meanwhile they are serious and have a sense of duty and responsibility. They have accepted the new values of life but do not despise the old ones. With them, too, the things of the spirit occupy high place. On the slope of Mount Carmel I engage in conversation with a school boy who offers to show me the way to the Haifa post

office. He is unable to comprehend my intention to return to my own land. He showers questions upon me: How can anyone wish to leave Palestine? How can one want to live elsewhere, having once been here? "Besides," he says, precociously, "if you are too old to do farm work you can be a merchant here, too." But upon learning that I was not a merchant but a rabbi he looked at me with his intelligent black eyes and his face reflected the reverence that he felt. It was plain that this reverence for religious learning was an integral part of him. For a moment he was silent, then blurted out: *"Im ken, ha-adon adam gadol!"* (Then you're a great man, aren't you?) I was thankful that the question, being merely rhetorical, required no answer.

6

Within this small area one perceives the most diverse social and religious extremes in juxtaposition. The complex spiritual atmosphere is not unlike the peculiar Palestinian climate which offers the sharpest contrasts, for it ranges from Alpine to tropical temperature. During a day's journey through Emek one observes heterogeneous social and religious types.

There are large estates privately owned, agricultural associations of the lower middle class, and co-operative and communistic colonies. Side by side with mystic chassidim one finds confirmed atheists. But the sanctity of labour is common to them all. The reconstruction of Palestine stands high above all divergences. Besides, there is not much debating in Palestine; there is work. There is no attempt to convert those who hold different views; to work alongside of them just as they are is the common desire.

Those were luminous days, the days that were granted me in Emek-Jezreel. One traverses these fragrant, cultivated fields amazed at the miraculous yield of a millenary ruin. One walks through a world-to-be where a new generation waxes. Its roots lie deep in the soil of the past, but it grows forth into a new life, rich in unimagined possibilities.

X

On the Way to Myself

Every time I am bound East I have the sensation of journeying towards myself. The feeling is at bottom a humble one, quite unlike the usual self-sufficiency of the western tourist who proceeds condescendingly to the backward Orient to behold things exotic. It arises from the feeling that the East, where least Europeanized, has preserved more that is intrinsically human than the West and stands closer to the sources of our being.

I make my way through Eastern cities, bazaars,

mosques, along highways and across deserts and, unwittingly and unresistingly, become one with a strange new atmosphere. The atmosphere of home evaporates at an increasing rate and recedes into the remote and fanciful. The significance that attaches to the habitual daily doings dwindles to nothing. Our sensations, excitements, and struggles decrease in importance; our certainties seem more and more doubtful. I have a revelation of something grander and profounder. The sky is higher, the air clearer, and the range of vision greater. I am encompassed by the quietude of profound loneliness. I become more distinctly aware of myself, as the walker through empty chambers hears the reverberations of each footstep. I apprehend, so to speak, the beating of my own soul. To give oneself up willingly and unreservedly to such a new mood is to make, unexpectedly, a valuable discovery: one finds oneself. One sometimes has a sensation as of passing before a large mirror and being amazed to observe that one is wearing one's clothes inside out. Here, more than when at home, I am oppressed by the inescapable feeling that we Westerners in most instances take hold of life the wrong way, we grasp it from without instead of seizing it from within. We occupy ourselves with all that

concerns the outer conditions of life (as well as with much that has nothing to do with it) but totally neglect our selves, our inner being. We listen to all kinds of voices, true and false, but remain deaf to the call of our own inner voice. Quiet intercourse with ourselves is all-important, but for that we never have time. Our real or imagined interests, needs, duties and responsibilities seem to encoat us, but we rarely or never heed our paramount obligation, that to our own nature. As Tagore says of the Westerners: "With much mending of nets they have no time to fish." We convert means into final ends, rights into duties. We are slaves under our liberties.

All of this becomes clearer while travelling in the Orient than at home. In this backward Orient one feels closer to the truth and farther from illusion. In this world of simple realities one learns to think essentially, not only formally, and the distinction between kernel and shell issues more sharply.

2

With every day that passes my humility and shame increase. The muezzin calling to prayer, the black-bearded and dome-browed picture post-card

vender, prompt me to self-searching. My pride in the consciousness of culture suffers a jolt. Whatever I encounter on my way seems to say to me: You Westerners constitute but half of civilized mankind, and not precisely the better half. The Oriental seems not to cherish an exaggerated respect for us Europeans. If we, perhaps, can claim a greater measure of civilization, those about me here have more culture. I recall the enlightened words of Empress Elizabeth to Christomanos, her Greek reader: "I feel thoroughly at home in Cairo; even in the thickest pack of donkeys and carriers I am less hemmed in than at a court ball and am almost as happy as in a forest. . . . Culture resides also in the Arabian desert that has not yet been penetrated by civilization. The throttling of culture connotes civilization. The latter makes its home in the West. It is a misplacement and counterfeit of the aim of life. Civilization is trolley cars, culture is the beautiful, free forest. Civilization is to be well read, culture means thinking. Civilization calls to us, singly and collectively, as if we were fledgelings; culture is intrinsic to each individual, a heritage from the entire past."

Facing these Orientals, untouched as they are by civilization, the artificiality and unnaturalness of our

western civilization becomes unusually apparent. Here I understand well the utterance of Ecclesiastes as the Oriental's condemnation of the artificiality of the West: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man simple; but they have sought out many inventions." We go through life as if masked, clad in alien garb and strait-jacketed. For the greater part of the day we are members of professions, experts, partisans, society folk, but only rarely human beings without special category. The ego vanishes behind the changing make-up. Man, whom God "made simple," has disfigured himself with his "many inventions" to the point of being unrecognizable. In the East I meet, with increasing frequency, human beings without inventions, without fancy dress, without labels. A life of amusement and social gaiety, in the European sense, is unknown to them. Their being is not centred in the chosen profession as with us. They do not like to work. A minimum of toil suffices to satisfy their incredibly small needs. The Oriental hardly knows poverty in our sense because he is fully contented. This contentment is the Oriental's great virtue, perhaps his great fortune as well. Even in this day he needs naught—like the patriarch Jacob—but, literally, "bread to eat and

clothes to clothe himself in." He has plenty of time in which to sit at ease, to devote himself to his family, to withdraw within himself, to meditate on life's puzzles or to listen to words of eternal truth. He belongs to himself! Here the lowest wretch seems to me to be less of a slave than the freest of Westerners. In his book on India, Waldemar Bonsels tells of buying from a pedlar near Mangalore a native shawl to hang in his room. "This little transaction yielded sufficient to enable the man to retire to privacy for several weeks." I meet like characters here. The ascetic fruit-vender in front of my hotel at Mount Carmel spends most of his day in contemplation. He begins down in Haifa with prayers and reading the Koran. After that he brings his basket of fruits to us "unbelievers." This modest commerce is but an interlude in his mental occupation. Towards evening he returns to the mosque with its cool and elevated atmosphere. In his own way this poor hawker is a nobleman, intellectual and inspired. Whatever is coarse and brutal seems foreign to him. His mind is pure and uncomplicated, he lives at peace with himself and with his God. In my intercourse with this folk I sometimes find it difficult to maintain faith in my western superiority, and I de-

sire to possess as my own something of their spiritual reserve and poise.

3

I carry with me the Bible and the Koran, and sometimes also Lâo-Tsze's *Tao-Teh King*; I have no use for other books. Here the Bible becomes newly intelligible to me, here the holy words become imbued with living life. This sky and this air gave form and colour to the scriptural word; in this landscape its flaming pathos radiated. Besides, the Bible is the best guide to the East, it leads me to a better understanding of what is new and unfamiliar here. The sacred scrolls of old reveal to me the same spiritual atmosphere, the same common chords of life, the same primitive earthliness, and the same immediate feeling of God's nearness that pervade this place today. Not much has changed since primeval times, essentially all is as it has been. The process of Europeanization has touched only the outer edge. The prospect, the people, and their habits remain virtually what they were. Wherever I turn I seem to meet animated quotations from the holy texts. The sacred books of the great religions reveal themselves in an

aspect that generally receives little attention. I come to perceive the high degree in which these religious writings are books of the Orient, unsurpassed and by no means antiquated expressions of Orientalism as a way of life. Breathing this air of Asia we live in the world of the Bible; the sun glows hotly above our heads, the expanse reaching into the infinite creates something like a physical perception of God's presence. The world of our childhood recurs to consciousness. Are we not once more in the nursery? These primitive, introspective people are our first acquaintances; these place names are the first we heard of; these heights, deserts, valleys and sacred lakes awoke our childish imaginations and near them we dreamt our azure dreams. Is this not, in a sense, our home, the spiritual home of all of us? Have we not all refreshed ourselves at the fountains of the East?

The soil whereon I stand is sacred to all mankind. Age-old memories are aglow amidst the weathered ruins. A silence that is almost unreal engulfs me. The absoluteness of the quiet wakes me as the halting of a train rouses one in a railway carriage. *"La musique ne commence que là, où le bruit a cessé,"* says Claudel. The lulling beats of the engine

stop and I wake to consciousness of myself. It is a different sky that arches over me than the pale, cold heaven that is pinched between grey walls at home. This heaven is the one of the Old Testament, the one "declaring the glory of God," and this is the firmament which "showeth His handiwork." The people of the Bible surround me here, well-known personalities which, seemingly, emerge living from the pages of Genesis.

The approach of evening finds me seated on a lonely hill near Tiberias, my eyes drinking in the divine beauty of Gennesaret. The landscape is covered with an everlasting peace, the air charged with eternal secrets. Shepherds and shepherdesses are on their way home with their flocks and I affect to recognize Jacob and Rachel amongst them. An aged Moslem is sitting alone on a rock, gazing into the infinite. It may be that he experiences God in this silently articulate Nature as the Psalmist once experienced Him: "There is no speech nor language, no sound to be heard, and yet their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." A reverent mood envelops us and each for himself turns to his devotions. Imperceptibly man and landscape have coalesced, and the meekness

of the Psalmist comes over us: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy hands, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

Wonderingly I observe the old Moslem seated nearby, his soul awake, lost in the endless. Is he an interpreter of the Koran, a seer, a saint? Perhaps he cultivates figs as did Amos of Tekoa, or sells Oriental rugs one day a week at the European hotels. His emaciated body, his threadbare clothes, his fiery eyes, his whole being, cry to me that this man has but one important concern in life: his soul. Everything about him seems to confirm Tagore's: "I am more than I appear to be." And I surmise that this Moslem accepts the profound and literal reality of the early Christian (thus truly Oriental) word: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

XI

The Awakening East

It is almost half a century since Gustave Le Bon wrote, in his comprehensive *La Civilisation des Arabes*: "As yet Europe is slightly acquainted with the races of the Orient, so different from those of the Occident. It ought to learn to know them, for the time draws near when its fate will be greatly affected by theirs." Some thirty years ago Camille Mauclair, at the age of twenty-three, expressed himself thus in *L'Orient Vierge,* a utopian novel of the year 2000:

"The Orient awakens! While we were at our tasks . . . over there they, too, were slowly disengaging themselves. . . . The land of fatalism was dreaming of action!"

These predictions have been realized in their entirety. The hour of the Oriental crisis, momentous to us all, has struck. Simultaneously Europe seeks to know Asia better and a clearer insight into the soul of the East becomes a possibility. Spring is in the air throughout the Orient. One is presentient of portentous events of the first order which, during the next few generations, will probably stamp the destinies of the world. The East is waking up from its thousand years' sleep. This awakening, which deserves greater attention than it has received, is very vexing to certain Foreign Offices; but it is only ostensibly—anyhow only partly—political and economic in character. Deep down the Asiatic crisis is a spiritual crisis. Asia wants to shake off the yoke of the West that it may retrieve its own collective soul. It wants to utilize the gains of science and technology and yet preserve and renew its spiritual heritage. An irresistible longing to return to their own common sources animates all the Oriental peoples. Asia wants to assert itself and its essential genius; the folk of the largest

continent are coalescing into a cultural unity, Pan-Asia. On all sides it is distinctly perceptible that the Oriental world is in a ferment. From Tokio to Constantinople, from China to Morocco, the struggle for emancipation and inner renewal is spreading. It is of small importance that the scene of the fight moves now to this, now to that point; victories and defeats, too, are but transitory episodes of small significance in this history-making conflict. Traversing the Orient one learns to understand the Asiatic crisis as an integrated whole. Japan—by all signs the leading political power in tomorrow's New Orient—initiated the fight for the rebirth of the East; China followed; the impulse to freedom spread over Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Egypt. India, we witness, contributes the mighty rising under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, himself a shining incarnation of Asia's great soul. Whatever the accidental causes, the fight is everywhere for one single thing: the liberation of the Oriental soul. Even Gandhi's spinning-wheel propaganda—the resistance of the English cotton trade and the promotion of home-industry—is, at bottom, mainly of religious and moral import. "Universal hand-spinning . . . will be a substantial, if

not absolute proof of real unity (between Hindus and Mussulmans). . . . Nothing can possibly unify and revivify India as the acceptance by all India of the spinning-wheel as a daily sacrament. . . ." And even where this movement seems to tend towards western civilization, it is yet directed to an inner renewal. The modernizing of Asia in no case connotes surrender to Europe (as is often implied in diplomatic reports); it always means *Asiatic* renewal. Kakuzo Okakura, a representative Japanese of the day, whose *Ideals of the East* possesses a certain documentary importance, reveals that secret in his account of Japan's transition from Asiatic feudality to a modern state. "It yet remained faithful," he says, "to its Asiatic soul." This is no less true of China where the process of modernization will, as nearly as one may judge, culminate in a renaissance of the ancient Chinese culture. Ku-Hu-Ming, a contemporary Chinese, writes: "The plain people hold, instinctively, that the Europeanization of China connotes the introduction of vulgarity and ugliness." Nor is the anti-religious polity of Angora to be interpreted as indicating Islam's disintegration. (Angora has thus far been an interrogation point. It is

quite unlikely that Kemal Pasha's unhistorical modernizing policy is Turkey's last word.) The abolition of the caliphate was paramountly a political measure, not at all a symptom of waning Islam. Perhaps not for centuries has Islam disclosed such great vitality and power to conquer as now. Angora's apparent compliance in the Mosul settlement speaks for, rather than against, the presence of that vitality.

These intimations are strengthened by new facts. In August, 1926, a Pan-Asiatic conference was held in Nagasaki; almost simultaneously Ibn Saud, Sultan of the Wahabis, opened the inter-Islamic conference in Mecca. The former, attended by delegates from Japan, China, India, Siam, Persia, the Philippines and Turkey, resolved to form an Asiatic League of Nations to be administered by a board composed of Japanese, Chinese, Indians and Filipinos, and to hold its next session in Peking. The object of the Mecca congress was to create a firm Panislamic organization. "The present weakness of Islam," said the Sultan in his address of welcome, "is due to the antagonism that exists amongst various sects. Search for the means by which to safeguard that which is common to all, and exclude whatever may hinder a union of hearts."

2

Here in the Orient one fact becomes increasingly clear to me: there is one common eastern soul. As against western civilization, Asia is a spiritual entity in spite of deep inner variations, in spite of its unexampled number of races, languages and religions. It represents a self-enclosed, uniform view of life that differs fundamentally from that of the West. This oneness permeates high and low, just as the sense of alienism to the West is deeply rooted in them all. Even a spirit as strongly influenced by western culture as Rabindranath Tagore is fully conscious of this essential difference: we may well adopt their machines, he says, but not with our hearts, only with our brains. We wish to master them wholly in the event of our absolutely needing them, but we will conquer them with all speed and yet save our souls from harm. Thus speaks the representative Easterner to whom the soul is life's supreme concern and who faces, quite uncomprehending, a mechanized world where technology possesses hegemony over spirit and nature.

Standing amidst the bewildering pandemonium of Jaffa's Arabian quarter, surrounded by fellahs,

Bedouins, camels and donkeys, my senses take in this exultant, uproarious, yet mysterious life; the heart of Asia beats here as in every Oriental bazaar. At this moment Damascus and Teheran, Bagdad and Calcutta, are probably exactly like this—everywhere the same riot of colour and the same seething life, the same peculiar vital rhythm, the same consummateness. All that is the East appears to be concentrated in this bazaar in Jaffa. I derive an almost physical sensation of the oneness of the Orient.

Have I not repeatedly had this identical experience, even though this is my first visit here? This is the Galata Bridge of Constantinople, abundant with life, and this is Adrianople's Turkish quarter on the Tunja—this is the Orient, the unique, unchangeable and indivisible. Here in Jaffa's bazaar the unity that I have so often pondered over becomes an immediate certainty to me. My thoughts turn to the great spirits of more than a century ago to whom this unity of the East was an indefeasible good and who proclaimed it enthusiastically: Herder, Goethe, Novalis. This perception has taken more positive form in the leading thinkers of our day. The painful concept of the decline of western civilization and the new quest of God in the West which is relapsing

into paganism, turn many eyes on the Orient and on the possibilities for regeneration which it holds. Hermann Keyserling, as well as several other devoted spirits in Germany and France, announce the desirability of a new synthesis of the vital values of East and West. Their books seem frequently to be frank self-confessions of the penitent West. Of late years the yearning for the East appears, especially in France, with ever-growing emphasis, and an increasing number of writers among the younger generation give heed to what they themselves denominate as *"appels de l'Orient."*

In the Hebrew National Library of Jerusalem I am enabled to verify my experience of the Jaffa bazaar from another point of view. Observing the rich collection of Oriental documents (i. e. the extremely valuable donation of Goldziher Orientalia), the tremendous forces that have been active during the last half-century in opening the religious world of the East to us become palpable to me. Assembled in this one place I find all those who have breathed new life into the religious revelations of the East—an impressive group. Translations of almost all the ancient Oriental sacred manuscripts are now available and are freely accessible. Here is Max Müller, Ori-

entalist of German birth, the first to give us a representative collection of Oriental scriptures in English translation. His monumental work, *The Sacred Books of the East,* (Oxford, 1879–1900, 49 vols.) communicated to us the canonical writings of the principal Oriental religions: Brahminism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Taoism and Islam. Since then philology and the comparative history of religions have done their share in illuminating the inner life of the East. A buried world has been uncovered to the day. The sayings of Gautama Buddha; *I-king,* the Chinese book of mystery; the Indian Vedas and Upanishads; the Babylonian Talmud of Judaism; may now be read in European versions. Having become part of the body of universal literature they belong to us all—a faithful mirror of the soul of the Orient and irrefutable testimony to its homogeneous unity as compared with the western feeling for the universe.

3

In the Orient everything is religion. Everywhere I seem to be in a large temple where people are ceaselessly at worship. Nowhere is the demarcation be-

tween sacred and profane, between Sabbath and weekday, as sharp as we draw it. The essential elements of religious life would seem to permeate the ordinary mood of the Oriental. He is always humble, devout and pathetic. In spirit he ever communes with the Prophet and his speech is replete with quotations from the Koran. He does not require the mosque to induce a religious mood, he finds the same solemn atmosphere everywhere—at home amidst his family, in the open places, in the little coffee houses. In the bazaar he cries his wares with quotations from sacred books. "Oh, you flower of the Prophet," intones a turbaned Nubian selling *lukkum,* a kind of sweet. "The refreshment of the archangel Gabriel!" Thus a peripatetic cook respecting his special dish: yoghurt, raw tomatoes and sliced cucumbers. A vender of raisin wine noisily beats two brass lids in incessant rhythm, calling, "Up, ye faithful, and refresh your palates."

This religious ground-note—an intuition of life rather than a view of life—seems to me the determining difference between the man of the East and the man of the West. To the Easterner things religious are not one of the values in life, but its very meaning, its unalterable rhythm, the all-dominant

accent of life. He measures the events of existence with religious measures, his relationship to life is decidedly transcendental. Even if he does not think, he perceives life in a certain degree *sub specie æternitatis.*

Max Nordau, in one of his last books (*Menschen und Menschliches von Heute,* 1915), introduces Sidi Ibrahim, a professor at Azhar University, who explains the difference between the eastern and the western response to life.

"Progress," says this representative Easterner among other things, "that is the word you Europeans always have on the tip of your tongues. But I have never understood what you mean by it. When I heard the word, my mind conjures up a picture of your boulevards. People are racing madly on them until they gasp for breath. An evil spirit seems to be invisibly behind them, whipping them on. Whither are they running? Why are they chasing about? No one knows. That is what your progress seems like to me. I see the commotion clearly enough but I do not see the aim and the purpose of it. You are tortured with restlessness; you suffer from fever—the Lord turn all evil from you and us. You are always craving excitement about you; you are forever wanting to change everything. You cannot leave things as they are. So you destroy the most beautiful gift granted to mankind here below: the joy of always finding everything again as one has always known it, dear and familiar. I was born in

Jarabub. When I visit my native town, everthing is in its place: the house in which I was a child, the street I played in, the brook I splashed in forty years ago. The dust has preserved my sainted father's footprints, and in the old orchard wall the marks which I scratched there as a dreaming boy are still to be seen. But now if I return to Cairo where you are masters, I find an apparently strange street where I had known a house so intimately, a house under a tree of which I had been accustomed to seek the shade. We know how to relive our childhood even as greybeards. You treat the past like the corpse of a criminal. You burn it and strew the ashes to the four winds. Perhaps I am mistaken, but it seems to me that among us men may become happy during their lives, but not among you. Europeans drink in order to lose consciousness. We Easterners do not yearn to be taken out of reality, but are contented with the blue sky, the sweet date, the creamy goat's milk. The European's learning makes him arrogant; it makes the Oriental modest. Our science is the voice of the fathers, while yours burrows among beasts, dead bodies, and stones. What does it matter whether the state blossoms or decays? That does not much depend on or change the fate of the individual Moslem. He cultivates his fields, he fattens his calf, he marries his children. Our cities perish only then when we have no reason for keeping them up. With us the city exists for the sake of the people, not the people for the sake of the city. In a word, the Europeans can do a great deal, but it does them no good. You strive after knowledge; we strive after righteousness and wisdom. You

train your children in skill; we train them in goodness. You are always talking of freedom but are bound in a thousand chains. We are all servants of the Lord, but the individual can do and leave undone whatever he pleases. Man's happiness grows out of his morality, not out of his erudition."

In like spirit André Malraux, a young Frenchman, in his recent *La tentation de l'Occident* lets a Chinese who has probed the spirit of the West express his opinion of the differences between East and West: *"Quiquonque se laisse diriger par l'esprit ne vivra plus que pour lui et par lui. Il n'est pas de plus néfaste parure. Nous voulons ne pas prendre conscience de nous-mêmes en tant qu'individus."* Failing to find within yourselves a picture of the world, the Chinese goes on, you conjure one up. The mentality essentially characteristic of some of our (Chinese) wise men, more so than those of other peoples, requires no ethics and æsthetics for, aspiring to nothing but self-perfection, it implies an æsthetic without possibility of conflicts. *"Quant à la morale il est vain de vouloir la soustraire aux beaux-arts."*

4

The morality of the Oriental seems to reflect

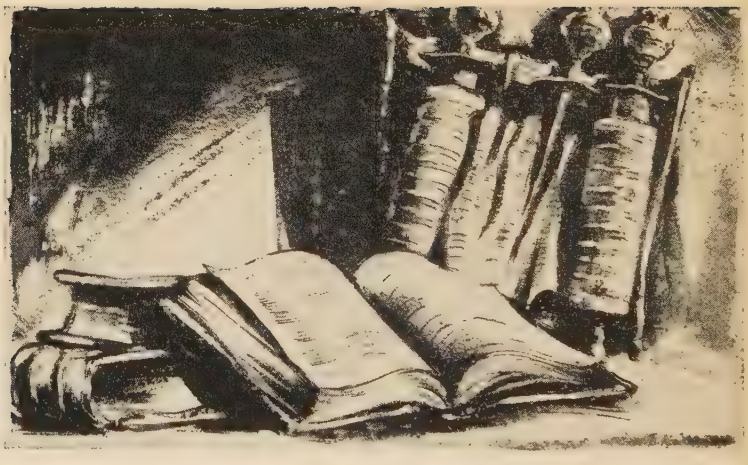
the attitude to life above indicated. He does not regard his own person as the centre of the world. He feels and thinks collectively; the life of the individual is of small moment; all that matters is the pattern as a whole. This feeling of the inner unity of life is ever present in him and governs his relationship to others. To live morally—that is the chord to which his life naturally responds. Since the young Solomon, dreaming at Gibeon, besought the Lord for "an understanding heart to discern between good and bad" the culture of the heart has been far more highly prized in the East, than that of the mind. Being good is more important than being capable; to be just is more important than to be learned; a clear conscience is more desirable than high place. "I would rather be stupid all my life than sin before the Lord for a moment," says Akabya ben Mahalal, the Tannaite. (Talmud Babli, Edayot II.) Morality is an inherent force rather than an acquired principle, a need rather than a duty. The common aim is toward becoming a link in the chain, toward mergence with the whole. The family still occupies its central place and keeps its patriarchal solidarity. Reverence for parents (not to be confused with the frequently superficial western variety) is the firm basis of its internal hierarchy.

The Oriental's morals move mainly in the direction of realization, towards the virtuous deed, to what the Israelites before Mount Sinai meant by "All that the Lord hath spoken we shall do." Fully in the biblical spirit the Chinese *I-king* says: "Heaven discloses the picture, they that are called bring it to life." Even to this day the devout Oriental follows in the footsteps of the prophet Habakkuk: he lives his faith.

After the disastrous earthquake in Japan it was no more than natural for the nobility and aristocracy, trained to the eastern code, to open their parks and palaces to the homeless, while the Europeanized Japanese wholesalers availed themselves of police guards to protect their doors against refugees. A comparison between two great revolutionaries of our time, Lenin and Gandhi, affords a notion of the difference between eastern and western morals. Lenin, schooled to western civilization, shuns no terroristic means to gain his ends; Gandhi, the Easterner, holds to *Ahimsa,* the doctrine of harmlessness. Lenin, in the belief that a new world can be erected on a decayed foundation, does not scruple to employ the accepted political methods; Gandhi's basic tenet is *Satyagraha* —absolute truth and honesty as a political principle.

The Occidental would rebuild *society;* the Oriental strives to rebuild *man.* The Occidental politician is an organizer on business lines; the Oriental is a priestly educator of men.

We ought to learn to understand the East better. We should then also live it and be warmed by its glow. A more intimate contact with the essential values of the Orient may lead us to find our own essential values once more, to find ourselves again. It is not enough that we teach the Orient, we must learn from it too. Our mutual relationship must be a mutual give and take. And what Okakura says of the East is true, *mutatis mutandis,* of us, too: "The task of Asia today is to promote and protect Asiatic culture so that it may again come into its own. When Vairopani beheld the Radiance he asked Buddha, Who is he? Buddha answered, He is you yourself! Whereupon Vairopani instantly became one with the supreme goal."



XII

Bible and Koran in Hand

On my travels through the East I sometimes consorted with Mussulmans learned in the Scriptures, and the Bible and Koran were my constant companions. One cannot be free of a sense of presence at the birthplace of religion—that this is the cradle of all beliefs in Divinity. There are ever-recurring reminders of a peculiar connection between the religious and the eastern attitude to life. Here the great revelations flamed up; the unfading source-teachings of the human race were proclaimed; the Scriptures of the

great faiths on which all religious life rests—from Rig-Veda to the Koran—were recorded. These canonized religious charters, the bibles of humanity, are likewise documents intrinsic to Asia; in them the soul of the East lives, they reflect the inward turn of mind of the Oriental, his cosmic attitude, his simple piety, his mature wisdom. The abstract and general maxims of the sacred books become incarnate in the East. Personal contact with this soil and these people discloses the high degree in which the East is still—and now perhaps more than ever—the living bearer of a religious message to humanity. It stirs my belief in the new religious possibilities with which Asia is pregnant. During solitary walks and conversations with learned scripturalists I ponder why the great religions have grown forth just out of this soil. None knows the processes engendered in a human bosom by the voice of God or when a spark from the eternal light lodges in a chosen heart. But one thing is evident: the fact that it was Asiatic soil that gave birth to the great founders of religions and that all the canonized religious writings were created under this sky is more than mere chance; no western spirit has produced anything similar, any potential code of life for millions of people. Intimate spiritual processes

of this kind can hardly be explained by external circumstances alone. But the climate and habits of life due to it were no doubt determining factors in the rise of religions. The eastern scene and the eastern sun were, obviously, eminently adapted to the production of a contemplative folk who turned their gaze inward in search of the impalpable interrelation of existence and the First Cause. These vast stretches and the stillness of the desert indubitably lent themselves to the making of contemplative mystics, seekers of God and finders of God, with minds averted from the world, thinkers of truths and founders of religions. The sun glows fiercely throughout the day and thus necessitates moderation in work and nourishment. At night the deep sky with its innumerable stars shelters contented people and provides coolness and peace. The ego dissolves in an awareness of the great interdependencies; there are moments that conceal eternities in their breast. Because of the restricted orbit of daily life the mind is the more free to float in the unlimited spaces of the universe. The trivialities of the day leave only a light impress, hence those who are seriously disposed become absorbed in contemplation of the riddle of existence. The personages of the Bible thus come to

seem almost a matter of course. Here Abraham strolls meditatively, observing the starry firmament which presages the infinite to him. Here Jacob dreams of the ladder set up on earth which rises towards heaven. Here Moses hears the call of the Lord out of a burning bush which is not consumed. Here the herdsman Amos tends his flock and subsists on sycomore fruit, and suddenly becomes aware of God's hand directing him to prophesy unto Israel. In this quietude Jesus of Nazareth wanders, wrestling with the impenetrable mystery of life and finding the way to God. Here Mohammed perceives Allah's call and here Gautama Buddha dreams of a life beyond the boundaries of reality.

Of late years we have had increasing testimonies to the high degree in which the Orient continues to stir the religious sensibilities of those who approach with seeking eyes. I quote but one example, Paul Morand. This worldly and epicurean novelist visited the Orient a few years ago and describes it in his book, *Rien que la Terre.* He was there awakened to religious reflection and prompted to a comparison of the essential values of the West and the East. His latest book, *Bouddha Vivant,* treats that question in fictional form. On his return home he made this

confession: "Having set out from Europe with its evident well-being based on a pagan and Latin materialism, I returned in humility. . . . It's a matter of climate. *What does not appear in the Occident except to the rare mystic, is in the Orient in everyday evidence.* . . . I am learning to be without desire. . . . The frightening spectacle, on my return, of the occidental world at bay, and of the universe on the eve of collapsing under an unbridled mechanism, in the indulgence of absurd desires—is a thing that shakes the heart."

In the East the fundamental common truths held by all religions became clear to him: "—what strikes me, is the portion of profound and compelling truth that is to be found in all religions, namely that for all of them the essential is the invisible . . . all are right, *for all are on the side of spirit as against matter* . . . they will some day finally come to make common cause, since theirs is a common enemy." (*Les Nouvelles Littéraires,* July 10, 1926.)

At sunset I rest on a hill at the Sea of Galilee, quite spellbound by the sublime beauty of the landscape. The eloquent silence overwhelms me and I feel the impulse to seek a verbal setting for a something luminous and inexpressible that crowds itself

upon me. Then I read one of the Psalms of David or Asaph, a prophecy of Jeremiah, the speech of God out of the whirlwind from Job, the Sermon on the Mount or one of the early suras of the Koran that waft to us the hot breath of this inconsumable Asia. This prospect and these Scriptures are of a piece. Life speaks to me in its never-changing language out of both. Sometimes Abul Hassan, an *imâm* learned in the Koran, sits beside me sympathetic with my emotion. He smiles his sublime smile: "It is inspiriting," he says, "to see a man wake up and rub the sleep out of his eyes."

2

We meet now and again, Abul Hassan and I, on the road between Haifa and Tiberias. A certain mutual confidence develops and we find it possible to converse freely and tolerantly. He is well versed in the Koran and displays a lively interest in my comparative study of the Bible and the Koran. He asks me which of the two seems more closely related to the fundamental spirit of the East. Both seem to me decidedly eastern writings, I reply. But the orientalism of the Bible is more sublimated, humanized,

ramified, and raised to terms of the universal, while that of the Koran is more primitive, sensuous, coarse. In the Bible the eternally human always manifests itself in the fundamental spirit of the East. The Koran, with a few exceptions, speaks the earth-bound and tribe-bound language of the desert Bedouin. Only in the earliest suras of the Koran do I find the authentic aspirations of the human soul; here are incandescence and living feeling of God, cosmic awareness and a breath of eternity. To illustrate the difference: both Scriptures are rooted in the eastern soil, but only the Bible could become a universal book, while the Koran remained an Oriental book. Wherever we may be we can enjoy reading the Bible; the Koran, however, I appreciate here in greater measure than in the North where I find it foreign, strange, and unassimilable.

The *imâm* smiles superiorly: So much the worse for you and the North!

But let me elucidate, I continue. The eastern element common to those and other religious writings as well, reveals itself in an intense piety, in a sensitiveness to the nearness of God. It is not the God disclosed in the catechism, the Sunday school, or the pulpit; it is the God of one's own experience whose

nearness is felt. It is the God of the biblical prophets. The prophet Hosea characterizes this sense of God that wells up from within as *Daat-Elohim,* the immediate inner knowledge of God, that which can be neither acquired nor proved. Jeremiah deprecates all acquired religion and acclaims the experiential knowledge of God; his ideal is an inner faith in such degree as to make all teaching of religion superfluous. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them." Jeremiah places this cognition of God in clear opposition to the teaching of God: only the former is true piety, the latter is mere knowledge, practice, tradition. His battle with the priests is essential religion in conflict with petrified ritualism, *Daat-Elohim* versus the Torah. "The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that keep to the law knew me not." He proclaims "a new covenant": not, like the first one, to be written in stone but "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." This experience of God is coloured by Nature. You people of the East feel God in nature more intensely than we others, because your response to nature is more

intense and more direct than ours. You remember how, in the LXXIX sura on "Those Who Tear Forth" (here, as elsewhere, in words partly taken from the Psalms) God's power over Nature is described so that one may comprehend God's power over man: ". . . Are ye more difficult to create, or the heaven which God hath built? He hath raised the height thereof, and hath perfectly formed the same: and he hath made the night thereof dark, and hath produced the light thereof. After this, he stretched out the earth, whence he caused to spring forth the water thereof, and the pasture thereof; and he established the mountains, for the use of yourselves, and of your cattle."

This recalls that cosmic prescience which rises to unsurpassed expression in the nature lyrics of the Bible, echoes of which are frequent in the Koran. Consider at this moment and at this place Psalm XIX or CIV: they hold an almost unearthly stillness, like that which now surrounds us, the breathing of the universe seems audible and one seems to hear every leaf and every blade of grass in the field tell of the wonders of the Lord. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." . . . "Thou makest darkness, and it is night:

wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. . . . These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth." Do you not hear the respiration of the universe? Is not the breath of God wafted to us out of these words? The extent to which the divine is felt through Nature is, more or less, an eastern matter and it lends to Oriental devoutness its living spontaneity. It is a characteristic of both Bible and Koran. The great miracle of God-ordained actuality, the greatest miracle of all, calls to us out of both. "Miracle!" your Prophet cries to the faint-hearted: "Is not this world, the work of Allah, filled with miracles?" The large clouds, born up there in the deep bosom of infinity, whence do they come? There they hang, the great black monsters, emptying

out their bulk of rain to give life to the dead soil—miracles! "Are you not yourselves miracles?" God created you from a morsel of earth, you possess beauty, strength, thought—"you know pity for one another." A vital religiousness at blood-heat, immediate and at first hand, thrives here. You, Abul Hassan, know this cosmic all-pervasiveness; you know it from your holy Scripture just as I know it from mine. You, however, inhale here the very air of the Prophet. The potentialities of religion are greater here than in our crowded, bustling, restless West.

I paused for a while and Abul Hassan, who had been listening absorbedly, encouraged me by the look in his large black eyes to continue.

There is something else, too. This perception of God which I call eastern has produced prayers of singular profundity and unique intimacy. The biblical prayer is eminently appropriate to the pastoral, primitive simplicity here about us. Those prayers are like religious sounds of nature. Man speaks to God as a son to his father—boyishly, trustingly, without pathos, modestly and without guile. When the patriarchs turn to God in their daily concerns, when Moses prays to the Lord to show him His ways, when Solomon appeals for an "understanding heart,"

it is always in that familiar tone which implies constant intercourse with Him. It is thus that one prays in deserts, on mountains, or here where we now sit —not in cathedrals. Have you ever read the Psalms of Asaph? He rises to the highest measure in expressing homely simplicity and religious inwardness. "I am continually with thee; (observe the verbal inversion; generally we read: Thou art with me!) thou hast holden me by my right hand. . . . Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Doubtless this recalls to you the prayers which Mohammed taught his wife Ayesha and his daughter Fatima. There are some wonderful passages there: "I flee to thee to escape hell and that which leads me there"; and "I seek the aid of thy mercy, do not deliver me to myself for a moment." The prayers in your Koran, in part, are known to constitute a course of conduct just as portions of our Psalms embody the story of a soul told in the form of prayers. The East is the classic ground of prayer, here prayer holds the centre of life. It is not a matter of solemn Sabbath ceremonies, it is part of life's routine. You have taken over the five daily devotions from the Persians (instead of the three originally borrowed from Judaism) but,

furthermore, your home is a house of prayer and every event is accompanied by prayers of varying length.

The shades of night now descend upon us, Abul Hassan, and there is still much that I should like to say to you. I am so rich with the gift of these bright days, and infinitely grateful for the new insight they have afforded me. We have not yet talked about the Easterner's sense of oneness, the biblical *Echod,* the foundation of religious as well as moral life. We have not touched upon the concept of sanctity, that which is both a religious and ethical category in the Semitic religions—something that is fulfilled *amongst* people, not outside of them or above them. It would have been a delight to talk to you in this rare spot, permeated by something of God's holiness, about the XIX chapter of Leviticus which opens with the ethical imperative of Judaism: "Ye shall be holy!" Yet what is essential, that upon which all else rests, is the immediate experience of God; this seems to me to be the source of the religiousness of the East. Everything originates from this and everything rests upon it. To sum up: I find the outstanding characteristic of the East in its religious aspect, with the Semites

—as Renan and others have already pointed out—in the forefront and with Israel the markedly religious folk. Bible and Koran alike reflect one idea peculiar to the East, both are saturated with the Oriental sense of the immediacy of God. I cannot gainsay that God, as revealed in the Koran, is touched with fear; the gate to hell is pictured as being always wide open and paradise allures with its indescribable bliss. But I agree wholly with Thomas Carlyle whose just tribute to Islam and the Koran is ever valid: "Look not at the falsehood of it, look at the truth of it. For these twelve centuries, it has been the religion and the life-guidance of the fifth part of the whole kindred of Mankind. Above all things, it has been a religion heartily believed. . . . This night the watchman on the streets of Cairo when he cries, 'Who goes?' will hear from the passenger, along with his answer, 'There is no God but God.' . . . Belief is great, life-giving. . . . These Arabs, the man Mahomet . . . is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada!" [1]

[1] *The Hero as Prophet,* 1840.

3

When I met Abul Hassan the next evening he was gentle as usual and his face wore its customary slightly superior smile.

I listened to your disquisition yesterday, he said. I can agree with much of it. But there are gulfs between us that never can be spanned. Put away those books! What matters is not how nearly *they* are alike, but the extent to which *you and I* resemble each other. What these books are like is not the deciding fact, but what they have made of us, what we are like. You said yesterday that one can read the Bible everywhere. But it does not suffice to *read* it: do you *live* it? We read the Koran and we observe it. The Koran is the most widely read book on earth (there are mosques where the entire Koran is perused daily and there are scripturalists who have read it through seventy thousand times); but it is, besides, the most thoroughly obeyed book. For twelve hundred years it has been a strict code of life for two hundred millions of people—what force have your strictures in the face of this irrefragable fact! Do not compare books, compare human beings. You live far away from Nature and hence far away from God. You

spend the greater part of your life within four walls trying to substitute man-made wares for what God has created. You worship manufactured idols, not the Omnipotent. You flee from yourselves to an unreal world outside of you. You adorn your homes with works of art, halting representations of God's beautiful world that you rarely find time to glance at. You render lip-service but your life is void of all things divine. You hand over your Bible to the priests for use on Sundays, but you yourselves read artificial, shoddy books that becloud the mind and often poison the soul. Your whole life is pretence and substitution. You have all that money can buy but your souls are dead. We live in God's unconfined Nature, gratefully enjoying His unsurpassed works of art. We read our holy Scriptures and find in them guidance and answers to the perplexing problems of life. To us the Koran is more than a book, it is our elixir of life. We stand in the centre of the universe and do not need to roam about in the void. Our soul is our most authentic reality. We do not need to dull our minds with fictions. We are not alone: Allah is ever with us and our faith is our life.

He seemed to regret his excessive frankness. He gave me his warm hand and continued: However, let

us be friends. Do not let us compare ourselves with each other, let us rather learn from each other. Are you not yourselves seeking the path back to the eternal essentials of life, and as for us, have we stopped at the Koran? From the day that Ghazali poured new life into shrivelled Islam to the present we have passed through no spiritual crisis more extensive than the one which now prevails. Mahdiism, our particular form of messianic ideal, opens up limitless possibilities to our still vital religious creative power. It gave rise to Persian Babism which seeks to gather a deepened Islam and Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism into a universal religion. Bahaism, an offshoot of Babism, rests on the same basis; with a Scripture of its own, *Kitab-i-akdas* (the Holy Scripture); its propaganda directed westward, too, it has already succeeded in establishing fraternities in Asia, Europe and North America. Yonder in Acre, directly opposite us, Bahaism thrives; already it numbers two million adherents. We have not yet halted. We are moving forward; perhaps we will meet some day. The Orient is awake though you believe it asleep. Islam is again astir. It is as if Al-Ghazali had risen from the grave to walk once more amongst us. We face a revival of religious thinking, a new *Ihja' ulum*

ad-din (Ghazali's work on the rebirth of the science of religion). How does the biblical poet sing in the Song of Songs? "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Epilogue

On the steamer that bears us homeward I learn how *not* to travel in the East. Seated among my fellow travellers I feel lonely and wholly out of the picture. We are again in the West, surrounded by the "blessings" of civilization; there is no longer a trace of Asia. The passengers discuss their "experiences" and I observe that most of them have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing; they bring out scarcely anything but their precious possessions, photographs and big hotel bills. Back there all of them were offered a rejuvenating spiritual bath, yet most were content

to touch the exotic water with their finger-tips. We had been quite close to the sources of our spiritual life, yet most of us walked past it unaware.

That is not the way to visit the Orient! If you would win something of the soul of the East do not approach it as you would a strange country but as if you were returning home—to yourself. Bear in mind that you yourself are in part an Easterner, however little you may be aware of it. Do not go condescendingly as a bringer of civilization, but as a disciple, humbly and receptively. When you wander through this wonderful world with its deserts and expanses, its dreaming rivers and smiling lakes, its heaven-seeking towers, its venerable palaces, temples, minarets, ruins, glittering like gold in the eastern sun, remember that you are treading the primeval soil of mankind, where we learnt to speak and to write, to reckon and to divide time, to create in word and form, and where the first presentiment of God Eternal was felt in the palpitating bosom of a man.

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In Memory

Mother - Belle Levy

by

Max J. Levy.